

# The gender fault line of Haiti's 2010 earthquake

*The fight for women's bodies*

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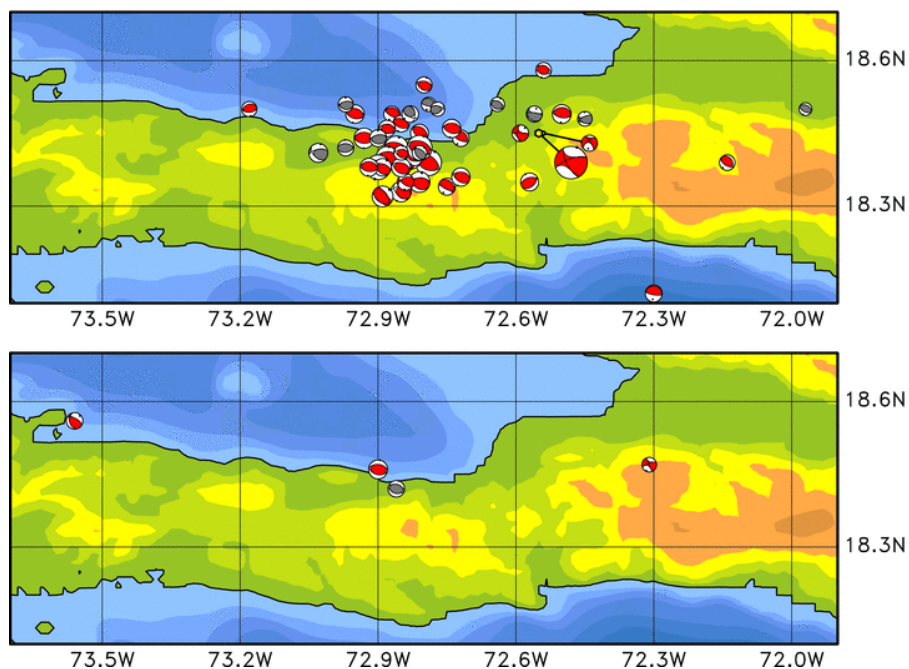
# Abstract

*This thesis examines the subject of gender based violence (GBV) in Haiti and how local and international organizations are addressing the issue on multiple levels. Due to historical, political and economic factors, the earthquake that struck the country on January 12<sup>th</sup> 2010 had devastating impacts. The earthquake worked as a catalyst that revealed deep underlying gender fault lines that had developed over long periods of time. To explore the construction of Haitian women's gendered vulnerability to disaster and how the issue of GBV is addressed, I analyze information gathered from interviews with eight different organizations working with anti-GBV projects Haiti. I argue that addressing the cultural attitudes underlying socially constructed gender inequalities – and the way they are expressed and upheld by structural violence – is the most important element in designing efforts to reduce GBV.*





Map 1: Political and Administrative Map of Haiti. Nations Online Project.



Map 2: “Top panel: focal mechanisms for 50 earthquakes of the 2010 January 12 Haiti main shock–aftershock sequence. Bottom panel: focal mechanisms for four earthquakes occurring in 1990–2008, prior to the 2010 main shock. All events are plotted at the NEIC epicentral locations. The mechanisms shown in grey are less well constrained than those shown in red” (Nettles & Hjörleifsdóttir, 2010, p. 376).





# Foreword

The journey from the initial idea for the thesis until its completion has been an exciting learning process. I am very grateful for the support I have received from the Center for Gender Research at the University of Oslo (UiO), and for having been given the opportunity to go to Haiti to complete my research.

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My research would not have been made possible without financial support from the Many Strong Voices Programme and the Center for Gender Research at UiO, and I am very grateful for their assistance.

I would also like to express my appreciation to my husband, Philip Hauck, for coming with me to Haiti and for all the love and support in the writing process.



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# Abbreviations

AFASDA - Asosyasyon Fanm Soley Dayiti / Association of Women of the Sun in Haiti

ANAPFEH - Association Nationale de Protection des Femmes et Enfants Haitiens / National Association for the Protection of Women and Children of Haiti

CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CHRGJ - Center for Human Rights and Global Justice

CIA - Central Intelligence Agency

GAD - Gender and Development

GARR - Groupe d'Appui aux Rapatriés et Réfugiés / Support Group for Repatriates and Refugees

GBH - Gender based violence

GOH - Government of Haiti

GNI - Gross National Income

HAGN - Haiti Adolescence Girls Network

HDI - Human Development Index

HNP - Haitian National Police

IDP - Internally Displaced Persons

IJDH – Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti

KONAP - National coalition of Professional Haitian women's organizations

KOFAVIV - Komisyon Fanm Viktim pou Viktim / Commission of Women Victims for Victims

NGO – Non Governmental Organization

MCFDF - Ministère à la Condition Féminine et aux Droits des Femmes / Haitian Ministry of Women's Affairs and Rights

MINUSTAH - Mission des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en Haïti / United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haïti

NYU - New York University

OBMICA - Centro para la Observación Migratoria y el Desarrollo Social en el Caribe /  
Observatory Caribbean Migrants

PAHO - Pan American Health Organisation

RNDDH - Réseau National de Defense des Droits Humains / Human Rights Defense Network

SOFA - Solidarité Fanm Ayisyen / Solidarity Organization of Women of Haiti

UiO - Universitet i Oslo / University of Oslo

UN - United Nations

UNDPA - United Nations Development Programme

UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund

USAID - U.S. Agency for International Development

VAW - Violence against women

WCD - Women, Culture and Development

WHO - World Health Organization

WID - Women in development

YWCA Haiti - Young Women's Christian Association in Haiti

# Organizations Interviewed<sup>1</sup>

The Commission of Women Victims for Victims (KOFAVIV - Komisyon Fanm Viktim pou Viktim)

**Vanecia Edouard Vital, Legal Assistant Student**

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KOFAVIV is an organization established by and for rape survivors from the poorest areas of Port-au-Prince. KOFAVIV supports individual women and works to transform the underlying conditions that give rise to sexual violence against the poor.

KOFAVIV creates and sustains solidarity groups, providing social and psychological support to victims of rape. The groups are designed to provide mutual emotional support and encourage members to begin to take collective action against gender violence.

For more information see: <http://www.madre.org/index/meet-madre-1/our-partners-6/haiti-kofaviv--36.html>, or <http://kofaviv.blogspot.no/>

National Human Rights Defense Network (RNDDH - Reseau National de Defense des Droits Humains)

**Pierre Esperance, Executive Director**

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RNDDH can be described in terms of two separate but equally important groups: the Port-au-Prince central office staff and the local departmental network staff and volunteers.

The RNDDH central office staff is organized into 12 working-groups, or commissions, with staff members taking part in four commissions on average. The commissions are divided according to the following themes: the Human Rights Indicator, RNDDH's quarterly newsletter; human rights education for the Haitian National Police (PNH); human rights education and training for grassroots organizations; Education Plus, human rights workshops for schools; RNDDH network development; gender issues in Haiti; minors in conflict with the law; prison monitoring; Haitian National Police (PNH) monitoring; monitoring of the judicial system; monitoring of economic, social and cultural rights; and RNDDH database development and training.

For more information see: <http://rnddh.org/en/>

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<sup>1</sup> All the information is retrieved from the respective organizations' webpages.

## Observatory Caribbean Migrants (OBMICA - Centro para la Observación Migratoria y el Desarrollo Social en el Caribe)

**Bridget Wooding, Director**

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OBMICA was founded in 2009 as a think-tank working on migration regarding the Dominican Republic from a gender perspective and a rights approach. The Centre's work complements the work of other institutions in the Caribbean and Latin America seeking to deepen the phenomenon of migration and influence public policies in this area. The OBMICA is an autonomous entity that works closely with the GRILAC Migration of FLACSO system in Latin America and the Caribbean and Network Migration and Development (INMD) among other partners in Hispaniola and internationally. Currently OBMICA is the leading institution in RD for purposes of establishing a national chapter on trafficking, corresponding to a regional observatory called ObservaLaTrata.

For more information see: <http://www.obmica.org/>

## Project Haiti

**Marie Mirlande Augustin, Project Director Manman Troll**

**Judex Naomi Pierre Louis, Project Manager Manman Troll**

**Marie Daniel Dorvilier, Project Manager Manman Troll**

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Project Haiti is a Norwegian/Haitian organization that has worked in Haiti since 2000. Our first project was the elementary school Petit Troll in Port au Prince. The organization has expended over the years, and is now running a number of projects both in Port au Prince and in the village of St. Louis du Sud in the south of Haiti.

Project Haiti's goal is to contribute to a better future for the people associated with our projects, and for Haiti as a nation. We believe that the best way of doing this is to provide people with knowledge and skills that enable them to improve their own situation. Project Haiti therefore focuses on education, capacity building and value creation.

For more information see: <http://prosjekthaiti.org/index.php>

## Support Group to Repatriates and Refugees (GARR - Le Groupe d'Appui aux Rapatriés et Réfugiés)

**Colette Lepinasse, Organization Coordinator**

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The Support Group to Repatriates and Refugees (GARR) is a platform for associations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that work with issues related to migration. In particular, GARR works with Haitian migrants to the Dominican Republic who are living in very difficult circumstances.



After the earthquake on January 12<sup>th</sup> 2010, GARR has also been working with internally displaced people (IDP) who live in the camps.

For more information see: <http://www.garr-haiti.org/>

## **UN Police Sexual and Gender Based Violence Team (UN Police SGBV Team)** **Harald Skjønshjell, Contingent Commander Norway**

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Established in October 2010, The UN Police SGBV Team (primarily from Norway) is a part of the UN Stabilisation Mission to Haiti (MINUSTAH). The team has been working to strengthen the capacity of Haiti's National Police to investigate and prevent sexual, gender based violence. Their activities include providing GBV awareness courses to HNP officers and to build building office spaces for receiving sexual assault survivors at HNP stations in the 9 departments outside of Port-au-Prince.

## **Viva Rio in Haiti** **Representatives**

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In 2004, Viva Rio was invited by the ONU to promote the peace and social inclusion in Haiti. The action of the organization was born in Bel Air, a neighborhood of Port au Prince, with the realization of projects in the area of sport, art and education at the community center Kay Nou (our house in Haiti). The earthquake of 2010, required the intensification of programs across the country.

Currently, Viva Rio continues to act in Bel Air, where the emphasis of the work is community safety. Expanded to Cité Soleil, where he implemented projects on the environment. In Bon Repos, rode the Black Pearls Football Academy and Costa Arcadins was founded the Center Louis R. Roy which invests in training young people in tourism

For more information see: <http://vivario.org.br/en/viva-rio-in-haiti/>

## **Young Women's Christian Association Haiti (YWCA Haiti)** **Colleen Larkin, Youth Center Coordinator**

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In 2007, two women concerned about the situation of women and girls in Haiti were invited to attend YWCA's 26th World Council in Nairobi, Kenya. They came back home inspired and determined to join the global movement, convinced other women from their community to join hands, and in 2011, at the 27th World Council in Zurich, Switzerland, the YWCA-Haiti became an affiliated member of the World YWCA.

YWCA-Haiti is registered as a foundation in Petion-Ville, a commune outside of Port-au-Prince, leading youth and women development initiatives throughout the metropolitan region.

YWCA-Haiti's objective is to promote the leadership of women and girls in Haiti, so that they can contribute to the development of their communities, as well as the country.

For more information see: <http://www.ywcahaiti.org/>





# 1 Introduction

Natural disasters need to be seen as social processes, triggered by ecological events, but rooted in social relations and history, where gender inequality determines the degree of risk.

(Rees, Pittaway & Bartlomomei, 2005, para. 18)

(...) people cannot be free until women's bodies are not forced to endure intimate violence, whether by parents, family members, soldiers, or actors of the state.

(Jean-Charles, 2014, p. 3)

Communities consist of both men and women, each of whom completes the other. We can ignore this fact, or we can involve men in our process to ensure their strong and complete support for women's active participation in the community.

(Morris, 2007, p.40)

## 1.1 'The gendered terrain': The case of Haiti

"Gender is a central organizing principle in social life" (Enarson, 1998, p. 157), and researchers have increasingly turned their attention to gender issues in disaster research (Enarson, 1998). In addition to class, race, age and disability, gender is identified as a major factor in determining vulnerability in the event of a disaster. Gendered vulnerability to disaster refers to how a person's gender impacts the ability to anticipate, deal with, and recover from a disaster, due to gender relations that are formed by historical, cultural, economic and environmental factors (Enarson, 1998). Women make up the majority of the world's poor (United Nations Women Watch, 2009), and often hold a subordinate position in society relative to that of their male counterparts (Enarson & Morrow, 1998). This places women in a sensitive position during and in the wake of a disaster, and is worsened by elements such as a gendered division of labor, lack of access to economic resources, land ownership and legal rights, and vulnerability to violence (Enarson & Morrow, 1998).

Violence against women (VAW) (here: also gender based violence [GBV]<sup>2</sup>) has been identified as the most widespread human rights abuse in the world (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005), and high levels of violence against women have been reported in several areas affected by disasters, irrespective of country development ranking (Nolan, 2011). It has become evident that if women and girls are vulnerable to violence before a disaster, “during and after an emergency, the breakdown of social services and systems exacerbates these vulnerabilities, increasing the risk of GBV” (Global Protection Cluster, n.d, p.1). This is because systems of protection are weakened, access to livelihood opportunities are lowered, and both physical and psychological health services are affected and therefore not able to provide the needed care (Global Protection Cluster, n.d.).

In the last few decades, an increase in all categories of disasters has resulted in widespread human suffering and great loss of human life (Lanka & Satpathy, 2007). Haiti is located at the center of the hurricane belt in the Caribbean and is subjected to periodic droughts and irregular flooding and earthquakes (Central Intelligence Agency, 2014). On January 12<sup>th</sup> 2010 Haiti was struck by an earthquake with devastating impacts, mostly in and near the highly populated capital Port-au-Prince (Oliver-Smith, 2012). Reports of high numbers of GBV started circling in the immediate aftermath, and Schuller (2014) has stated that “[GBV] has by all accounts increased since the earthquake” (p. 1). A massive humanitarian response followed the disaster, and more development organizations joined the efforts of existing organizations (Vorbe, 2012). Before the earthquake it was estimated that more than 10 000 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were working in Haiti (Edmonds, 2012). Much debate has surrounded the impact of what has been described as “humanitarian neocolonialism” (Vorbe, 2012, p. 60). Edmonds (2012) writes: “Haiti has the most privatized social-service sector in the Americas, with some 80 percent of the country’s basic services provided by the private sector through NGOs” (p. 63). The current social, political and economic situation in Haiti is far from the aspirations of The Constitution<sup>3</sup>, which was voted in by more than 90 percent of the Haitian people in 1987 and describes the desire for a more independent, decentralized and just state (Deshommes, 2012). However, as Haiti’s political landscape is most likely not going to change over night, and that the presence of NGOs will

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<sup>2</sup> See p. 4 for definition.

<sup>3</sup> Elements include: “A real decentralization of power and resources; a genuine agrarian reform; universal education, and the literacy campaign; the realization of the status of the Creole language as official and the promotion of national culture; a strong and stable state, capable of protecting the values, traditions, sovereignty, independence and national vision, and; a Haitian nation that is socially just, economically free and politically independent” (Deshommes, 2012, p. 251).

remain for a while longer, it becomes important to analyze the work that is being conducted by local and international organizations in order to uncover promising initiatives and learn from their experiences. In relation to GBV, this also includes exploring the current gender ideologies that shape, and are reinforced by, the different structures in Haiti.

### 1.1.1 Thesis statement and research questions

In this thesis, I argue that addressing the cultural attitudes underlying socially constructed gender inequalities – and the way these inequalities are expressed and upheld by structural violence – is the most important element in designing efforts to reduce gender based violence. This involves recognizing the unequal distribution of power in the various relationships influencing women's lives, and how women's bodies have become a site for manifestation of these inequalities.

Research questions:

- How are cultural attitudes forming Haitian male-female gender relations and women's vulnerability to violence?
- What structural factors contribute to uphold and perpetuate existing gender inequalities in Haiti?
- How has gendered vulnerability to disaster impacted the level of violence against women in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake?
- What can we learn from the experiences of local and international organizations, mainly in Port-au-Prince, to better identify the most appropriate strategies to address GBV?

### 1.1.2 Theory and method

Feminist standpoint theory is the underlying theory guiding my research. Heise's (1998) ecological framework is used as the frame to explain the multilevel factors that influence the occurrence and risk of GBV. To explore the different development projects that address GBV in Haiti, mainly in Port-au-Prince, I have used Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott's (2004) adaptation of the ecological framework to map out the intervention levels. In order to base the research on information that was rooted in the lived experiences of people working to address GBV in the given setting, I decided to conduct my fieldwork in Port-au-Prince, using

the qualitative method of semi-structured interviews to collect the needed data. Interviews were made with representatives for eight different local and international NGOs, and the United Nations Police Sexual and GBV Team, over a period of four weeks. The data was analyzed using a thematic analysis, and divided into three set a priori themes relevant to issues of GBV.

### 1.1.3 Definition of gender based violence and violence against women

Ellsberg and Heise (2005) identify violence against women (VAW) as the most widespread human rights abuse in the world. It is recognized as a serious health problem that compromises both the physical and mental health of affected women (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). In general, there are many men that are not violent, and women can also be perpetrators of violence against men (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). However, the disproportionate level of men's VAW in intimate and interpersonal relationships, and women's greater risk of suffering sexual assault throughout her lifetime, underline the importance of the problem (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005).

In this paper, I base my definition of VAW on the following United Nations definition:

#### UNITED NATIONS DEFINITION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The term "violence against women" means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. Accordingly, violence against women encompasses but is not limited to the following:

- a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;
- b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;
- c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.



Acts of violence against women also include forced sterilization and forced abortion, coercive/forced use of contraceptives, female infanticide and prenatal sex selection.

*United Nations General Assembly, 1993*

Although VAW encompasses all these areas, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to cover the area of psychological violence. The main focus here is therefore on acts that result in physical and/or sexual violence against women. VAW and GBV are used interchangeably to refer to the physical and sexual abuses of women. However, it is noted that GBV can also refer to violence against men, transgendered people and other genders.

Gender is a complex term, but I use Joan Scott's (as cited in Lewis, 2003) proposition of gender as: "the social organization of sexual difference" (p. 11). Being a woman is therefore more complicated than being born with the sex "female", and both cultural definitions and the social experience of being a woman changes in relation to aspects such as class, race, religion and ethnicity (Lewis, 2003). Further discussion on the subject of gender and gender relations can be found in chapter 3.

## 1.2 Background: Haiti

Haiti is a country located in the Caribbean, and makes up the island Hispaniola together with the Dominican Republic (CIA, 2013). The country has a population of 9.89 million and covers a total area of 27 750 km<sup>2</sup> (CIA, 2013). Haiti is considered the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere (CIA, 2013), and is ranked 168 on the human development index (HDI) (United Nations Development Programme, 2014). The income distribution is highly unequal, which is represented by a gini coefficient of 59.21<sup>4</sup> (UNDP, 2014). In 2011, Haiti had a gross national income (GNI) per capita of USD 1635.69 (UNDP, 2014). The average life expectancy at birth is 63.1 years, and the mean years of schooling of adults are 4.9 (UNDP, 2014). Haiti has a value of 0.592 on the gender inequality index (GII) (UNDP, 2014), an index used to measure inequalities between men and women in the areas of reproductive health, empowerment and the labor market, where 0 is no inequality and 1 reflects that women have the poorest levels available in all the three measured dimensions (UNDP, n.d. a).

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<sup>4</sup> The gini coefficient is defined as a "measure of the deviation of the distribution of income among individuals or households within a country from a perfectly equal distribution. A value of 0 represents absolute equality, a value of 100 absolute inequality" (UNDP, 2013, para. 1).

The written history of Haiti, starting in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, reveals the historical construction of Haiti's political and economic situation in 2010, and hence vulnerability to the earthquake (Oliver-Smith, 2012). Spanish settlers arrived on the island in 1493, and brought with them European diseases that annihilated the original population, the Taino (Oliver-Smith, 2012). Over the next 125 years the European powers fought for control of the area, until French West India Company seized control over a third of the island (Oliver-Smith, 2012). The use of African slaves to work on established sugar and coffee plantations was introduced in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and the country soon became the richest Caribbean colony, with the wealth benefiting the European settlers and their offspring (Oliver-Smith, 2012). Offspring with slave concubines, called *mulâtres*, were often considered free by the French colonial system, and many would later become the first national elites of Haiti (Oliver-Smith, 2012). Slave-revolts in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century eventually led to the independence of the colony in 1804, making Haiti the first black republic in the world (Oliver-Smith, 2012). However, in order for France to acknowledge Haiti's independence they demanded 90 million gold francs in reparations for their losses (Oliver-Smith, 2012) Haiti was forced to agree to this by the means of threats of invasion and an embargo upheld by France, Britain and the US, and was only able to fully pay off the debt by the assistance of high-interest loans in 1947 (Oliver-Smith, 2012). This had devastating effects on the Haitian economy since it gained its independence, and in 2001 France itself condemned this enforced debt as a 'crime against humanity' (Schuller, 2012).

In 1915, the US invaded Haiti, and they stayed officially in power for 19 years (Schuller, 2012). Favoring Haitians with lighter skin as trading partners and representative leaders (Schuller, 2012), the US cooperated with the elite, who "began accumulating power and wealth while draining the nation's resources" (Oliver-Smith, 2012, p.19). In line with the US's capitalistic ideology, foreign companies were given access to Haitian land (Schuller, 2012). French, the language spoken mainly by the elite, was chosen as the official language, and a modern army was built to fight any opposition (Schuller, 2012). Schuller (2012) writes: "The occupation triggered understandable rage, nationalism, and racial animosity" (p. 20). Oliver-Smith (2012) underlines that "While impoverishing the population with brutality, militarism, mismanagement, and corruption, Haitian elites did little to construct a viable infrastructure or a functional institutional framework in the country" (p.19). Following the 19 year occupation, foreign-supported dictatorships, democratic elected governments influenced by US interests, devastating neo-liberal economic policies, and great migration to the cities,

were part of shaping Haiti towards the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Schuller, 2012). A rising number of NGOs in Haiti created the presence of what has been called a “parallel state”, as donors circumvented the government and directed their resources directly into the NGO sector (Schuller, 2012). Following their strategic interests, USAID funded NGOs who promoted neo-liberal policies and supported political candidates that matched US foreign interests (Schuller, 2012). Other NGOs were attempting to fill the gaps in the almost non-existing social service provision of the Haitian government (Edmonds, 2012). High levels of violence led to the UN Security Council’s proposition of implementing a UN peacekeeping force in Haiti, which resulted in the permanent presence of Mission des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en Haïti (MINUSTAH) in 2004 (Schuller, 2012). In 2013, 50.16 percent of the Haitian population were living in multidimensional poverty<sup>5</sup> (UNDP, 2014), and the living conditions in the city slums are characterized by a lack of basic services, such as portable water, electricity and sanitation (Duramy, 2014). Youth unemployment combined with poverty in urban settings “engender an environment that is susceptible to civil unrest and gang activity” (Duramy, 2014, p.31).

Haiti is vulnerable to several natural hazards, such as regular hurricanes, flooding and mudslides in the rainy season (d’Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). Small to large scale earthquakes occur on the western part of Hispaniola, though since 1976 no earthquakes larger than M ~5<sup>6</sup> have been documented in southern Haiti (Nettles and Hjörleifsdóttir, 2010). The political and economic situation, combined with the lack of infrastructure, make the Haitian population very vulnerable in the event of a disaster. In 2008 alone, storms and hurricanes in the months of August and September killed about 793 people (Katz, 2013). At the end of the hurricane season, the disasters had resulted in damages worth US\$900 million, an amount that was equal to about 14.6 percent of Haiti’s GDP (Duramy, 2014).

### 1.2.1 The 2010 earthquake

Due to the historical, political, social and economic factors, the earthquake that struck the country on January 12<sup>th</sup> 2010 had devastating impacts (Oliver-Smith, 2012). The

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<sup>5</sup> Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is “complements monetary measures of poverty by considering overlapping deprivations suffered by people at the same time. The index identifies deprivations across the same three dimensions as the HDI and shows the number of people who are multi-dimensionally poor (suffering deprivations in 33% of weighted indicators) and the number of deprivations with which poor households typically contend with” (UNDP, n.d. b, para. 1).

<sup>6</sup> Magnitude similar to 5.

earthquake had a Mw<sup>7</sup> of 7.0 (Nettles and Hjörleifsdóttir, 2010), and severely impacted the capital Port-au-Prince and a large part of the surrounding rural areas (Duramy, 2011). It is estimated that over 200,000<sup>8</sup> people died (Jagannath, Phillips & Shah, 2011-2012) and that between 250,000 and 300,000 people suffered injuries or were permanently disabled (Duramy, 2011). A total of 285 000 buildings and houses were destroyed in the earthquake, including 3,978 schools and 49 university buildings (Etienne, 2012). Of the 49 hospitals in the earthquake zone, 30 were either left in ruins or damaged (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). The situation was deemed a “complex emergency”, defined as a situation when “there is a high impact in all areas that significantly complicates all relief and recovery efforts” (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012, p. 212). The number of displaced citizens was about 2 million (Etienne, 2012), and many people gathered in camps or on empty land in the immediate aftermath (Duramy, 2011). In the summer of 2010, the International Organization for Migration reported that there were about 1300 camps in all of Haiti, housing 1.5 million people (Schuller, 2014). 862 of these camps were located in Port-au-Prince (Schuller, 2014). The conditions in many of the camps were characterized by poor sanitation and hygiene, lack of water and lack of security measures, such as the presence of police (Duramy, 2011). In the report *Our bodies are still trembling: Haitian women's fight against rape*, which was released in July 2010, it is underlined that the earthquake “created a severe crisis of safety and security – especially for those living in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps – exacerbating the already grave problem of sexual violence” (Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti, MADRE, TransAfrica Forum, University of Minnesota Law School Human Rights Litigation and Advocacy Clinic & University of Virginia School of Law International Human Rights Law Clinic and Human Rights Program, 2010, p. 4).

### 1.2.2 The history of GBV in Haiti

VAW has been an issue in Haiti (as in most other countries) for a long time (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). The gender inequalities that uphold the subjugation of women have their roots in the time when Haiti was still a slave colony, and the historic lack of initiatives in taking the appropriate measures to protect women's bodies from violence reflect both cultural

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<sup>7</sup> “The moment magnitude (Mw) scale, based on the concept of seismic moment” (United States Geological Survey, 2012, para. 1).

<sup>8</sup> The death toll of the earthquake is contested. Katz (2013) stated that “a team of researchers financed by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) who carried out a household survey would estimate that no more than 85,000 people could have died; a team of U.S. academics would retort that the final figure was 158,000. The Haitian government kept raising its number until it reached 316,000” (p. 70).

and social attitudes about VAW (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). Gina Ulysse (as cited in Nolan, 2011), a Haitian-born anthropology professor at the Wesleyan University, US, has stated: "Women have secondary status, and that goes all the way back to pre-independence" (p. 96). Both rape and sexual torture of girls and women have been used as forms of oppression by Haitian leaders and officials, including the dictator "Papa Doc" Duvalier, ex-General Raoul Cédras, and Jean-Bertrand Aristide (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). Human rights groups documented that "From 2002 to 2004, with Aristide struggling to stay in power, political violence and cases of rape exploded anew. Hundreds of women and girls – many very young – were raped, some by police, others by pro- and anti-Aristide supporters," (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012, p. 77). As a response to this violence local groups strongly advocated for improved protection for women, forcing the government to take action (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). Rape of women had long been judged as a crime against a woman's honor under Haitian law that could be resolved by a financial settlement to the rape survivor's family (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012), or by ordering the perpetrator to marry the woman he raped (Nolan, 2011). In 2005, Haitian feminists were part of pushing through the passing of a rape law that made it a crime that can be punished by 10 years to life (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). This is just one example of how Haitian women have organized and advocated for their rights throughout the country's history (Duramy, 2014). The UN peacekeeping force, MINUSTAH, has both been accused for and has been proven to have raped women in Haiti since they arrived in 2004 (Nolan, 2011). Nolan (2011) describes such allegations of rape committed by UN peacekeepers in the two cities Gonaïves and Léogâne in 2005 and 2006. Furthermore, over one hundred Sri Lankan troops had to leave Haiti in 2007 after they were "accused of sexual abuses" (Jean-Charles, 2014, p. 266).

A government report from 2006 stated that 26 percent of women and girls in Haiti "over the age of 15 had been victims of sexual or gender-based violence" (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012, p. 78). However, it is important to remember that these are official numbers of reported cases, and that the real numbers are likely to be higher (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). This highlights how one should be careful "to paint post-quake gender-based violence as either exaggerated or exceptional" (Schuller, 2014, p. 12). Nonetheless, the continuation and progressively worsening of the issue in the conditions after the earthquake are critical points of concern (Schuller, 2014).

### 1.2.3 GBV in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake

Every time there is a social or political problem it's the most vulnerable people who suffer the most. In this case it's the women.

(P. Esperance, personal communication, September 3, 2013)

The Haiti earthquake brought to the surface a lot of things which people had studied and knew about (...). When you have 1.5 million people under canvas in extremely precarious situations, women were taken advantage of in these circumstances.

(B. Wooding, personal communication, September 5, 2013)

In June 2010, the report *Our bodies are still trembling: Haitian women's fight against rape* underlined that the lack of cooperation with local Haitians in the design and execution of relief efforts deepened the structural inequalities that were present before the earthquake. This increased the vulnerability of the most vulnerable groups in Haitian society: women, children, and the poor (IIDH et al., 2010). The same report documented how “women and girls living in the internally displaced persons (IDP) camps face alarming rates of rape and other gender-based violence (GBV)” (IIDH et al., p. 6). The Center for Human Rights and Global Justice (CHRGJ) at the New York University (NYU) School of Law conducted a household survey regarding sexual violence in January 2011 in four IDP camps located both in and around Port-au-Prince (CHRGJ, NYU School of Law, Satterthwaite & Opgenhaffen, 2012). The results of the survey were severe: 14 percent of the participants “reported that one or more members of their household had been victimized by rape, unwanted touching, or both” (CHRGJ et al., 2012, p.162). In addition, nine percent of the participants reported that one or more of their household members had been raped since the 2010 earthquake (CHRGJ et al., 2012). Gender and age of the sexual assault survivors were not reported by all the participants in the study, but among those who did about 86 percent were women and girls (CHRGJ et al., 2012). Despite these high numbers of sexual violence, underreporting due to factors such as shame and fear of reprisals support the case that the actual numbers might even be higher (CHRGJ et al., 2012).

Transactional sex to get food aid cards, shelter and other services were also reported as a widespread issue in the aftermath of the earthquake, and personal stories reveal how many of these cases were coerced transactional sex (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). In addition, domestic violence continues to be a dominant problem (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). In

the report *Beyond Shock* it is pointed out that, as before the earthquake, “far more cases of domestic violence involving physical aggression have been reported than rape cases – typically a 3:1 ratio at some agencies” (d’Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012, p. 33). GBV was also reported to have increased in the slum areas that people returned to when camps were closed down or after forced evictions (d’Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012).

Although it is not within the scope of this thesis to cover violence against LGBT as a separate subject, violence in the form of male “corrective rape” of lesbian and bisexual women in the IDP camps was reported as “definitely a problem” by SEROvie and IGLHRC in April 2012 (d’Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012, p.118).

The health consequences resulting from GBV can be severe (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). Many of the women who were interviewed for the report *Our bodies are still trembling: Haitian women’s fight against rape*, revealed both mental and physical traumas as a result of the violence (IJDH et al., 2010). These women showed signs of “post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), including extreme fear, nervousness, helplessness, inability to sleep, nightmares and signs of depression” (IJDH et al., 2010, p.12). Many also had suicidal thoughts (IJDH et al., 2010). The majority of rape survivors had some form of physical pain, such as “stomach pain, headaches, difficulty walking, and vaginal infection and bleeding,” (p.12) as well as other injuries from beatings and stabbings that accompanied the rape (IJDH et al., 2010). At the time when the interviews were made for the report, most of the women and girls had not seen a medical professional. This was due to little knowledge about the location of such services and not knowing that many of them did not charge fees, as well as fear of stigmatization and the possibility of retaliation (IJDH et al., 2010). In order to prosecute a rape, the rape survivor needs to obtain a medical certificate as documentation (Nolan, 2011). Nolan (2011) describes that “the certificate details the attack and the victim’s age and injuries – sometimes noting whether she was a virgin or not prior to the rape” (p. 94-95). In the cases where the women interviewed had disclosed the rape, it was not custom for the medical professionals to automatically provide medical certificates. One woman also reported that the clinic she attended stated that they did not have any certificates left (IJDH et al., 2010).

An additional concern is also women and girl’s subjection to STDs and unwanted – and potentially dangerous - pregnancies (d’Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). A United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) survey from October 2010 reported a “threefold increase of

pregnancy cases in the camps over the prior 10 months. Two-thirds of the respondents indicated that these were ‘undesired pregnancies’” (d’Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012, p. 120). MADRE et al (2012) underline that “a young woman who is injured and traumatized by rape may be unable to exercise her human right to attend school, work, or participate in public life” (p. 158).

The main immediate causes of GBV in the IDP camps after the earthquake are cited to be the lack of protection and poor living conditions (IJDH et al., 2010). The capacity of the police was reduced due to the loss of police officers and the destruction of many police stations (IJDH et al., 2010). In April 2010, the total number of police officers in Haiti was 2261, which is a ratio of one police officer per 3981 people (IJDH et al., 2010). In addition, of these very few were female police officers, and sexual assault survivors that reported their cases were sometimes met with attitudes that either stigmatized them or disregarded the issue of GBV altogether (IJDH et al., 2010). D’Adesky and PotoFamn+Fi (2012) underline that many women who reported violence and rape to the police before the earthquake subsequently experienced being raped and abused by the police, which explains why many women fear the police and do not report such crimes. The approved MINUSTAH presence in Haiti was increased from a maximum of 7000 military personnel to 9000 military personnel, and from more than 2000 UN police to 4300 UN police in mid-2010 (d’Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). To improve security in the IDP camps and slum areas of Port-au-Prince many of the units were assigned to patrol these areas (d’Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). However, a lack of coordination with grassroot organizations and local communities made the efforts of the security forces less effective, and humanitarian organizations have reported that their presence in the camps is not adequate (IJDH et al., 2010). A UN police force from Bangladesh consisting of only women was deployed in June 2010 to patrol IDP camps, but with no knowledge of Haitian Creole or French they had little capability to successfully communicate with camp populations (IJDH et al., 2010). Edmonds et al (2012) state that “the lack of sufficient translators to accompany missions exacerbates MINUSTAH’s inability to effectively document abuses and communicate with the very people it is charged to protect” (p. 52-53).

In cases where partners, parents or other people providing support and protection had passed away, the loss of social support networks also made women and girls more vulnerable (IJDH et al., 2010). Many young girls were left with no adult supervision, and surviving



women were left with the responsibility as primary caretakers of the children, elderly and people disabled from the disaster, with little access to sources of income (IJDH et al., 2010).

The living conditions in the IDP camps established in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake were generally poor, and many groups rushed to establish tent communities without taking into account the needs of the female residents (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). Overcrowding and insufficient camp structures thus exacerbated the already traumatic effects of the disaster (IJDH et al., 2010). Sanitation facilities were often not equipped with locks on the doors and were placed far from sleeping areas (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). In some camps, people were also charged a fee for use of the latrines (Schuller, 2014). Lack of sufficient hygiene facilities left women and girls having to bath in public, which made them vulnerable to sexual harassment (IJDH et al., 2010; Schuller, 2014). The shelters that women and girls lived in were mostly inadequate, as they often slept on the ground in shelters only made up by tarps or tents (IJDH et al., 2010). This, in combination with poor security, rendered women and girls easy targets as perpetrators could easily access their tents (IJDH et al., 2010). Poor lighting has also been listed as major factor that increased the possibility of rape (IJDH et al., 2010). However, d'Adesky and PotoFamn+Fi (2012) question this as research shows that rape in the IDP camps happened at all hours, and often in the day when girls were left alone in the tents while their caretakers were out to seek work. None the less, initiatives made to improve the lighting in the camps did increase resident's security, and women also reported that they felt more safe (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). Protective zones for women and girls were established in some IDP camps, but the majority did not provide such services (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012).

#### 1.2.4 Reviewing statistics

When reviewing the statistics of GBV after the earthquake, it is important to consider how advocacy and public awareness in the aftermath can have influenced the number of people reporting violence. A lack of data on the issue before the disaster also makes it difficult to estimate the increase in GBV (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). Herzberger (as cited in Lee & Renzetti, 1990) has stated that sensitive research topics<sup>9</sup> often face four major obstacles: Inconsistent operational definitions, lack of control or comparison groups, failure to utilize multivariate analysis, and the limits of retrospective studies" (p. 515). Comparison of

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<sup>9</sup> See p. 33.

different research on the topic is therefore difficult. However, as the Haitian women's health organization SOFA reported in November 2010: "sexual violence targeting women is a growing emergency" (MADRE et al., 2012, p. 159). This, as well as the post-earthquake reports of GBV by both local and international organizations that had been working with the issue prior to the earthquake, supports the statement that GBV "has by all accounts increased since the earthquake" (Schuller, 2014, p.1).

### 1.2.5 Addressing GBV in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake

Multiple initiatives were taken in the aftermath of the earthquake to counter GBV, including actors such as the government, the UN, local and international NGOs, and the civic population (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012).

The Haitian Ministry of Women's Affairs and Rights (MCFDF in French) is the "key government agency responsible for guiding Gender and GBV-related policies and reforms of law" (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012, p. 44). The MCFDF building was destroyed in the earthquake, and along with the death of its Director-General Theodore and other staff, the ministry was unable to provide government leadership directly after the disaster. Even before the earthquake the ministry was struggling with few resources, and it took several weeks before it could resume its functions (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). To address the situation, the UN's GBV Sub-Cluster (Sub-Cluster) in Haiti, consisting of UN groups, NGOs and the government of Haiti (GOH), was to support and build on previous anti-GBV efforts (IJDH et al., 2010), and to coordinate and provide communication among the field actors addressing GBV (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). In January 2010, they released the Guide to Gender-Aware Post Disaster Needs Assessment, calling for the need for "(1) substantive consultation with women, girls, boys and men in the identification of their needs, priorities and interests; (2) design of gender aware recovery in initiatives that are formed by, and respond to, the articulated and demonstrated needs of the affected communities and the entities serving them, and; (3) identification of spontaneous recovery activities of women, men, and marginalized communities that can be supported and strengthened" (IJDH et al., 2010, p.18). However, IJDH et al. (2010) pointed out that within the first six months after the guide was released many of these steps were not implemented. In addition, the Sub-Cluster had yet to meet with many local NGOs, and had by large failed to confer with poor women in the IDP camps in the planning (IJDH et al., 2010).

Despite highlighting women's vulnerabilities, it is important to recognize their role as agents of change before, during and after a disaster (IJDH et al., 2010). IJDH et al (2010) and d'Adesky and PotoFamn+Fi (2012) describe how many women's grassroots organizations that existed before the earthquake quickly re-mobilized in the post-quake setting to continue their activities. Many of these organizations had lost leaders and staff in the disaster, and had members that themselves were now living in the IDP camps. Despite this, within weeks the majority of such organizations, including Kay Fanm, SOFA, AFASDA and KOFAVIV, had set up temporary offices and were continuing to provide services (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). Leaders of the organization KONAP, the National coalition of Professional Haitian women's organizations, worked with UN Women in providing workshops to both police and MINUSTAH units on how to deal with sexual violence (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). In addition, they also worked in cooperation with medical teams to hand out GBV reference cards that contained contact information about where victims could seek assistance (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). Other organization initiatives include the distribution of "dignity hygiene kits" with items such as soap and sanitary pads, rape counseling, accompanying victims to needed medical or legal services, and to coordinate outreach networks that could assist victims in locating emergency services (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012).

The civic response to the security vacuum that was created immediately after the earthquake has often been overlooked in the general media (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). Community efforts in some camps were so successful at addressing the security issues that researchers today question if the replacement of these community-run structures by UN headed camp management "was a good move security-wise" (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012, p. 151). D'Adesky and PotoFamn+Fi (2012) write:

Haitians at all levels joined daytime and after-dark citizen watchdog groups and camp patrols, created guarded play and school areas for children, staffed emergency clinics, and worked closely with returning HNP and UN troops to chase down perpetrators of crime (p.151).

In the following period, multiple programs and initiatives to counter GBV have been implemented by a diverse set of actors and networks, including the MCFDF (D'Adesky and PotoFamn+Fi, 2012).

### 1.3 Relevance to the field

The history of the word "development" has left it somewhat undifferentiated to "progress" and "evolution", and it is generally understood as a change towards something better (Shanin, 1997). Societal change is not a new concept, cultures and practices witnessed today are not unaffected by earlier interactions with outside actors, they are a product or a "hybrid" of these interactions (Bebbington, 2000). However, induced change to bring about a specific outcome is central to development, and what the product of this change is to be, exactly what that is referred to as "better", has depended on the general ideals of society at the time of definition (Shanin, 1997). In international law, it was first in 1949 that the need for an extended protection of women and children was called for, although this was limited to war time (Duramy, 2011). In 1979, the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (Duramy, 2011). Discrimination against women was here defined as "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women...of human rights and fundamental freedoms" (as cited in Duramy, 2011, p. 1206). The CEDAW was ratified by Haiti in 1981 (UN, 1990). GBV was not included as a specific focus by the UN until 1993, when the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the elimination of Violence against Women (UN Declaration) (Duramy, 2011). The following year, the Organization of American States adopted the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, known as the Convention of Belém Do Para (Duramy, 2011). This convention was ratified by Haiti in 1996, through which Haiti agreed to "pursue policies to prevent, punish and eradicate such violence by all appropriate means and commit to adopting fair and effective legislation and procedures to address the various forms of gender-based violence" (Duramy, 2011, p. 1207). Though this has not been reflected in praxis (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012), ending GBV is set as a societal goal.

Enarson (1998) writes: "The social experience of disaster affirms, reflects, disrupts, and otherwise engages gendered social relationships, practices, and institutions. Disasters unfold in these highly gendered social systems" (p. 4). To understand the extent of GBV that is often documented in the aftermath of a disaster, one must explore how gendered vulnerability to disaster is constructed. From a UN human rights framework, the root causes of VAW are described to be "power imbalances and structural inequality between men and

women” (as cited in Manjoo, 2011, p. 7). However, within epidemiology, little attention has been paid to the structural or societal causes of violence (True, 2012). True (2012) attributes the reason for this to the preference of health researchers to focus on the individual and “changing individual behavior directly, rather than analyzing the social relations and structures and changing individual behavior indirectly through societal interventions to affect the structural causes of this behavior” (p. 23). By exploring the cultural attitudes regarding male-female gender relations in Haiti, narratives of GBV, and structural violence, one can map out the context in which the earthquake happened and better understand the setting where current anti-GBV projects take place.

Rondinelli (1993) states that creating change through projects must be a learning process, characterized by flexibility and responsiveness, in order to respond to a setting that is uncertain and complex. The complexity of societies and the number of possible variables and responses to a project that are hidden from project planners underline the importance of evaluation and reflection in the implementation process (Rondinelli, 1993). The following quote from Rondinelli (1993) explains the need for seeing planning and implementation as “mutually dependent activities” (p. 19):

Because the ability of development planners to predict and control the outcomes of their programs and projects under the conditions of uncertainty is quite limited, their methods must be either suited to recognizing and dealing with uncertainty, detecting and correcting errors, generating and using knowledge as experiments progress, and modifying actions as opportunities and constraints appear during implementation (p.18).

Therefore, analyzing the personal experiences of people living in Haiti and working with the issue of GBV on several levels, can assist in generating information that can be used to form further social interventions and projects in the area researched, as well as inform others who are not familiar with the subject about its importance and complexity.

In this study, I have used the qualitative method of semi-structured interviews with representatives for eight different local and international organizations working to address GBV in Haiti, mainly in Port-au-Prince, to explore the research areas outlined above. Due to the limitation of the research area and study sample, the findings are meant to be a description

and theoretical interpretation of the lived experiences of the interviewees, and do not present a comprehensive analysis of the multiple issues regarding GBV in the diverse areas of Haiti.

## 1.4 Structure of the thesis

The introduction chapter presents a general overview of the history of Haiti and GBV in Haiti before and after the 2010 earthquake, how the issue was addressed in the aftermath of the earthquake, and the relevance of this thesis to the field of GBV research. Chapter 2 will discuss the theories and methods used in this research, the experience and challenges of conducting the fieldwork in Haiti, and the ethical perspectives regarding sensitive research. In chapter 3, I present five themes that were found in the analysis of the interviews about cultural attitudes concerning male-female gender relations, and how these attitudes are reflected and reinforced in the home, economy, politics, laws and regulations, and education. These themes will be explored in relation to the historical formation of male-female gender relations in Haiti and within the framework of structural violence. Gender inequality and power will be discussed as overarching subjects, together with the ‘script of violence’. In chapter 4, a presentation of development in Haiti and different theories of working with gender in development will be followed by an analysis of addressing GBV on multiple levels and in different sectors. Finally, the conclusion chapter will summarize the findings of the thesis and provide recommendations for future initiatives.

## 2 Theory and method

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the underlying theories that are used in my research, as well as a description of and rationale for the chosen methods. In addition I will examine my experiences and role in the interview process, and the ethical perspectives on research regarding GBV.

### 2.2 Theory

Epistemology is defined by Sprague and Kobryniewicz (2004) as “theory about knowledge” (p.78). All epistemologies contain certain assumptions about the person who holds knowledge, the known, and the process of obtaining knowledge (Sprague & Kobryniewicz, 2004). As such, an epistemology guides us in “how to approach an understanding of a phenomenon” (Sprague & Kobryniewicz, 2004, p. 78), and the base it provides leads us when choosing one theory over another.

#### 2.2.1 Standpoint theory

Feminist standpoint theory is the underlying theory guiding my research. This theory was developed from the second-wave feminist thinking of the 1970s, and central to its theorists is the “feminist analysis and critiques of relations between material experience, power, and epistemology, and (of) the effects of power relations on the production of knowledge” (Bowell, n.d., para.1). Feminist standpoint theorists center on three areas:

- (a) Knowledge is socially situated.
- (b) Marginalized groups are socially situated in ways that make it more possible for them to be aware of things and ask questions than it is for the non-marginalized.
- (c) Research, particularly that focused on power relations, should begin with the lives of the marginalized.

(Bowell, n.d., para.1)

Regarding the first area, Harding (2004) underlines that a person's social situation influences the kind of knowledge this person possesses, in particular when their position is critically unexamined. When it comes to generating feminist knowledge, it is essential that women's experiences are used as its base (Harding, 2004). Dominant groups who fail to question the effect of their advantaged social situation on their acquired beliefs have a scientifically and epistemologically disadvantage in knowledge production (Harding, 2004). To maximize objectivity in research, the subject of knowledge must be critically examined in the same way as the object of knowledge (Harding, 2004). No research can be seen as neutral, as "culturewide (or nearly culturewide) beliefs function as evidence at every stage in scientific enquiry: in the selection of problems, the formation of hypotheses, the design of research (including the organization of research communities), the collection of data, decisions about when to stop research, the way results of research are reported, and so on" (Harding, 2004, p. 55). Strong objectivity therefore requires strong reflexivity on the part of the researcher (Harding, 2004).

Elaborating on the second and third area of feminist standpoint theory, women are often among the most marginalized groups in a society, and focusing on women's lives "can provide the starting point for asking new, critical questions about not only those women's lives but also about men's lives and, most importantly, the causal relationships between them" (Harding, 2004, p.43). This can thus allow us to better understand existing gender systems and power relationships (Harding, 2004). However, as Howell (n.d.) points out, seeing women as a homogenous group can cause a sense of false universalism of feminist knowledge. To avoid this one must also take into account differences amongst women, in particular race, class and sexual orientation. Harding (2004) states that "the subjects/agents of knowledge for feminist standpoint theory are multiple, heterogeneous, and contradictory or incoherent" (p. 51), and one will therefore not reinforce essentialist thinking when producing knowledge.

Letherby (2003) underlines the importance of creating a non-hierarchical relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee, as much as it is possible. Oakley (as cited in Letherby, 2003) argues how "the interview should be a mutual interaction in which the researcher is open and gives something of herself by talking about herself, by answering questions when asked and perhaps feeding back some findings to respondents when writing up" (p. 83). This way, the interviewee is also given some control of the interview, and the relationship will be characterized more by mutuality than expert/subordinate positions (Letherby, 2003).



In addition, the feminist standpoint theorists aim to generate knowledge to be used in bringing about social transformation (Bowell, n.d.). Research is therefore not constructed for a neutral purpose, but to produce knowledge that “does not bend toward dominate interest groups but toward democratic ends” (Hesse-Biber & Leckenby, 2004, p. 221).

Within standpoint theory, men are given equal resources to produce knowledge as women: by basing their thought in the lives of women through feminist theories they can reveal information about how the gender system works (Harding, 2004b). The ability of standpoint theory to create “men’s feminist subject positions” (Harding, 2004b, p. 188) has been explored by Harding (2004b). First, men’s access to knowledge about “political struggles against androcentrism and male supremacy in family life, in emotional relations, at work, in public agenda politics, and in the disciplines where dominant conceptual frameworks are organized and packaged” (Harding, 2004b, p. 189) offer men the possibility to identify forms of androcentrism that may be hidden for women. Second, as there are differences in the socially assigned activities that men and women engage in, this can give men and women different interests in distinctive kinds of knowledge even when working in the same environment, creating “different patterns of systematic knowledge and systematic ignorance” (Harding, 2004b, p. 190).

If I were to replace the use of standpoint theory with positivist theory, the principles guiding my research would change in a number of ways. Central to positivism is objective and value-neutral researchers that set out to explore causal relationships between variables (Hesse-Biber, Leavy & Yaiser, 2004). “Positivism assumes that truth comes from eliminating the role of subjective judgments and interpretations, thus sharply enforcing the dichotomy between the knower and the known” (Sprague & Kobryniewicz, 2004, p. 78). This objectivity is questioned by standpoint theory, which rather focuses on situated knowledge (Harding, 2004). If I were to adhere to positivism, I would not include strong reflexivity in my project and reveal my own personal and academic background for conducting such a project. The relationship with the research participants is also of importance here. Feminist researchers question the subject-object relation used in positivism, and make a stand for more egalitarian relationships throughout the research process (Radeloff, 2009). Such an approach “could diminish or even eliminate power inequality produced in the collection and dissemination of research” (Radeloff, 2009, p. 315). If I were to maintain a subject-object relationship with the

research participants I would reinforce the power difference between the researcher and the researched, rather than including the researched as equals in the process.

The neutrality claim of positivist research also differs quite drastically from the social justice commitment of feminist research. “Research conducted within a feminist framework is attentive to issues of difference, the questioning of social power, resistance to scientific oppression, and a commitment to political activism and social justice” (Hesse-Biber, Leavy & Yaiser, 2004, p. 3). My research will be conducted with the aim of collecting information that can be used to promote action in the fields of GBV and gendered vulnerability to disaster, and not as mere neutral information. With a positivist approach this would not be one of my priorities.

### 2.2.2 Reflection

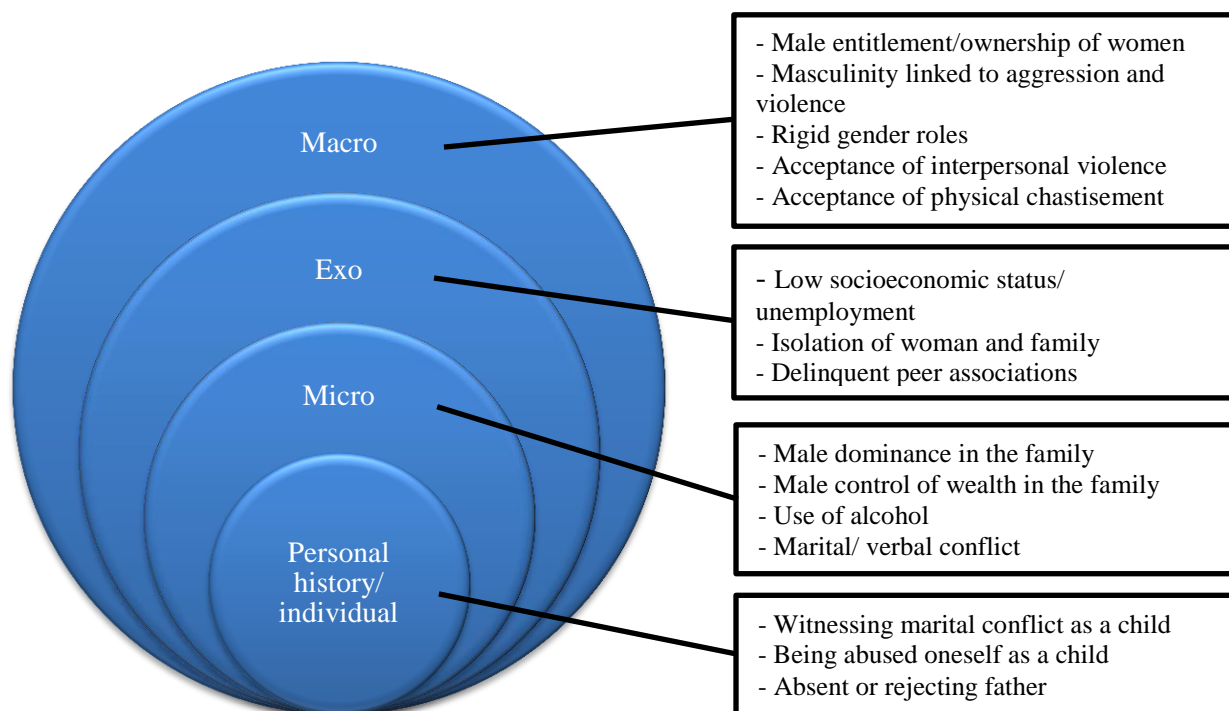
According to standpoint theory all knowledge is socially situated, and I therefore need to interrogate the effect of my social situation and beliefs on my research. Being a woman I have personally experienced many of the prejudices, discriminations and disadvantages of belonging to my gender. However, being white and middle class have given me a racial and economic advantage and have thus shaped my experiences. As a native Norwegian I am also a citizen of a developed, socialistic country with one of the highest gender equality rates in the world (World Economic Forum, Harvard University & University of California, Berkeley, 2013). This has been part of forming my personal beliefs in gender equality, human rights and socialistic values. Believing that the subjugation of women is one of the most important obstacles to development of our time, I am truly interested in women’s lives and situations around the world, the factors that shape their lived experiences, and how to facilitate women’s personal, economic and social emancipation. Having completed an interdisciplinary bachelor’s degree in international development studies and health studies, I have been trained to see the complex interaction of many factors that influence people’s lives, rather than focusing on single determinants. This has in turn made me choose interdisciplinary theories for examining and explaining the issue of GBV.

### 2.2.3 Ecological framework

I will use the ecological framework developed by Heise (1998) as a framework to explain GBV. Heise (1998) describes how “an ecological approach to abuse conceptualizes

violence as a multifaceted phenomenon grounded in an interplay among personal, situational, and sociocultural factors” (p. 263-264), and encompasses four levels: the individual, micro, exo, and macro (Heise, 1998). Several cross-cultural studies have shown that certain factors at each of these levels work together to increase the risk for men to abuse women (Heise, 1998).

The following model exemplifies the various factors at each level:



**Figure 1: Ecological framework**

*Heise (1998)*

The innermost circle shows factors of an individual’s personal history that take part in shaping his/her violent behavior, and subsequently his/her relationships (Heise, 1998). The micro-level is the immediate context – often the family or other close relationships – where the abuse happens (Heise, 1998). The exo-level represents “the institutions and social structures, both formal and informal, that embed the microsystem – the world of work, neighborhood, social networks, and identity groups” (Heise, 1998, p. 264). The last level, the macro, displays the general cultural attitudes (Heise, 1998).

## Individual

Heise (1998) defines individual factors as “those features of an individual’s developmental experience or personality that shape his or her response to microsystem and exosystem stressors” (p. 266). The majority of current findings of such factors have resulted from case control studies that have been able to produce reliable information that can be confirmed in matched controls (Heise, 1998). Here, three developmental experiences have been found to influence a man’s probability of being violent against women: witnessing marital conflict as a child, being abused oneself as a child, and having an absent or rejecting father (Heise, 1998).

Hotaling and Sugarman’s (as cited in Heise, 1998) review of empirical studies on husband to wife violence found that witnessing and experiencing violence as a child were the most consistent risk factors for abusing a future partner. In the studies reviewed, 94% correlation was found for the first risk factor and 69% for the latter. The connection between witnessing violence as a child and future partner abuse has also been found in studies about wife abuse in Chile, Nicaragua, Cambodia and Canada (Heise, 1998). Several longitudinal studies have revealed that sexual victimization as a child is a strong risk factor for later sexual aggression towards women (Heise, 1998). However, not all men that have witnessed or experienced family violence become abusers themselves when older (Heise, 1998). In addition, a history of family violence is not a prerequisite for future partner violence. A study conducted by Cesar (as cited in Heise, 1998) revealed that 38% of the wife abusers in her research had not been exposed to physical aggression in the family when young. Exactly how experiencing these risk factors translate into becoming violent later in life is not clear, but “research shows that many of the personality features that are characteristic of at least one subtype of batterer are highly reminiscent of personality disturbances that derive from trauma: exaggerated separation anxiety, problems with regulating emotion, an intense dependency on primary interpersonal relationships, and an inability of tolerating being alone” (p. 268). Having an absent or rejecting father as a child has also been linked to future violent behavior towards women by different forms of research (Heise, 1998). Cultures with absent father-figures have been found to have the most violent men, and this is in part thought to be caused by stronger peer-influence dominated by aggressive competition, dominance relationships and hostility against women (Heise, 1998). Emotionally abusive and rejecting fathers have been found by Dutton (as cited in Heise, 1998) to contribute to boys’ formation of personality patterns that are linked to abusiveness as an adult.

## Micro

The microsystem is here defined as “those interactions in which a person directly engages with others as well as to the subjective meanings assigned to those interactions” (Heise, 1998, p. 269). The majority of abusive episodes for a violent man towards his partner take place in the microcosm of the family (Heise, 1998). When violent acts take place outside of the family, the microsystem refers to the immediate context (Heise, 1998). The main factors that increase the risk of VAW at this level are male dominance in the family, male control of wealth in the family, marital conflict, and alcohol abuse (Heise, 1998).

Several studies have shown the link between male dominance in the traditional family structure and general violence against women (Heise, 1998). A cross-cultural study conducted by Levinson (as cited in Heise, 1998) revealed that “male economic and decision-making authority in the family was one of the strongest predictors of societies that demonstrate high violence against women” (p. 270). Yllo and Straus’s research (as cited in Heise, 1998) comparing the rate of marital violence in 30 US states, also uncovered a direct relationship between male-dominant norms and men’s violence against their wives. In states that favored more egalitarian decision making between men and women in marriage, the rate of wife beating was half of that found in states that believed men had the right to dominate. Other studies have found that in families where the wife is economically dependent on her husband, wife beating and marital rape are more likely to occur (Heise, 1998). Marital conflict is a high risk factor for VAW, as demonstrated in several studies that link verbal marital disagreement to wife assault (Heise, 1998). Coleman and Straus (as cited in Heise, 1998) propose that this is related to the family power structure in which the conflict takes place: “when conflict occurs in an asymmetrical power structure, a much higher risk of violence exists than when conflict occurs in an egalitarian relationship” (p. 272). High alcohol consumption is the final identified risk factor for VAW at this level (Heise, 1998). The reasons for this is unclear, but possible explanations include that alcohol reduces inhibitions, affects judgment, increases aggressive behavior in some individuals, or serves as an excuse for violent behavior (Heise, 1998).

## Exo

The exosystem is defined by Belsky (as cited in Heise, 1998) as “social structures both formal and informal that impinge on the immediate settings in which a person is found and

thereby influence, delimit or determine what goes on there” (p. 273). This is where we work, our neighborhoods, and social networks (Heise, 1998). The risk factors here that are associated with VAW are low socioeconomic status, unemployment, isolation of women and the family, and delinquent peer associations (Heise, 1998).

It is recognized that GBV happens in all socioeconomic classes, but research show that wife abuse is more predominant in low income families and when the men are unemployed (Heise, 1998). Descriptive studies have also found a linear relationship between economic deterioration in a family and increased levels of VAW (Heise, 1998). Though the reasons for this are unclear, Heise (1998) suggests that poverty can be linked to feelings of hopelessness, stress and frustration, and violence may be a response to “a sense of inadequacy in some men for failing to live up to their culturally defined role of provider” (p. 274 – 275). Other factors may also be increased marital conflict due to economic stress, or decreased economic capacity for women to leave a violent relationship (Heise, 1998). As a side note to Heise’s (1998) research, it is important to point out that history has repeatedly shown that men that belong to the dominant classes in a society often target women in lower classes or from other races for both physical and sexual violence (d’Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012; Rey, 1999). In a personal conversation with a Haitian woman, it was disclosed that the cars from the elite in Haiti driving down to poor neighborhoods and picking up very young girls, was not often included in the reports regarding GBV (Anonym, personal communication, May 10, 2013). Therefore, there is ground for arguing that there are different forms of VAW associated with different socioeconomic classes. The risk factor of isolation of women and the family has been found to be both “a cause and consequence of wife abuse” (Heise, 1998, p. 275). Battered women do not only have fewer social interactions and participate less in public life, but their isolation increases when the violence escalates (Heise, 1998). A cross-cultural study by Counts, Brown and Campell (as cited in Heise, 1998) found that high levels of VAW were more prevalent in societies where family matters were considered highly private and not open to outside interference, than in societies where family or outside actors would intervene in the event of violence. The final risk factor is related to peer associations. Among adolescent males, peer behavior and attitudes are found to have a big influence on encouraging sexual aggression (Heise, 1998). Gwartney-Gibbs et al (as cited in Heise, 1998) discovered that males with peers that were sexually aggressive were almost twice as likely to report having had coerced or forced intercourse compared to males with peers that were not sexually

aggressive. Several studies show that in groups where sexual aggression is the norm, males act accordingly in order to be accepted or held in high esteem by their peers (Heise, 1998).

## Macro

The macrosystem is the “the broad set of cultural values and beliefs that permeate and inform the other three layers of the social ecology” (Heise, 1998, p. 277), and influences the distribution of power in intimate relationships and in a society at large (Heise, 1998). There are several risk factors for increasing VAW at this level, including a notion of masculinity that is linked to aggression and violence, rigid gender roles, men’s entitlement/ownership of women, acceptance of interpersonal violence, and acceptance of physical chastisement (Heise, 1998).

One of the most prominent macrosystem factors is a “cultural definition of manhood that is linked to dominance, toughness, or male honor” (Heise, 1998, p. 277). In particular, rape is more common in places where masculinity is associated with such traits (Heise, 1998). This form of masculinity also resembles the “macho personality constellation”, or hypermasculinity, that has been described by the two US psychologists Mosher and Sirkin (as cited in Heise, 1998). Heise (1998) describes how “hypermasculine men have calloused sexual attitudes toward women; they see violence as manly and desirable and they view danger as exciting” (p. 278). Mosher and Tomkins (as cited in Heise, 1998) state that it is in the socialization of a hypermasculine man that the personality develops to conform to these masculine ideals and to suppress other emotions that are not considered masculine. In their eyes, acts of sexual aggression are therefore something that validates their masculinity (Heise, 1998). Research also show that rigid gender roles, both at the level of the individual and in general society, is a risk factor for VAW (Heise, 1998). Strict social and cultural divided roles and expectations for men and women are found to have a strong correlation with interpersonal violence (Heise, 1998). Ethnographic studies of societies with less defined gender roles reveal low levels of, or no, VAW (Heise, 1998). Whiting and Edward (as cited in Heise, 1998) findings of a reduction in gender differences in aggression when boys were assigned to do domestic chores, tasks that were considered to belong to women, supports this research. Many researchers have suggested a link between men’s sense of ownership of women and VAW, due to historical and qualitative data on the subject (Heise, 1998). In many cultures wives have been seen as the property of the husband, obliged to obey his wishes and not to speak up against him (Heise, 1998). This is also reflected in religious texts, such as the Skandapurana

in Hinduism and the Bible in Christianity (Heise, 1998). As example is Ephesians 5:22-23 in the Bible (as cited in Heise, 1998): “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husband, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church” (p. 281). In these cases, men see it as their right to treat women as they please. In societies where physical chastisement of women is culturally accepted, often under defined circumstances, it is also a risk factor for VAW (Heise, 1998). The use of violence as a punishment or response is often justified when women do not adhere to gender norms, such as “disobeying their husband, failing to prepare meals on time, or sexual infidelity” (Heise, 1998, p. 282). Finally, in cultures that tolerate violence as a way of resolving interpersonal conflicts, VAW is more likely to occur (Heise, 1998). This has been found in both cross-cultural studies on rape, and in cross-cultural research on family violence (Heise, 1998).

Heise (1998) underlines that the framework is not complete or definite, but it serves as a tool for understanding many of the known factors, and the various levels where they occur, that are identified to increase GBV. True (2012) points out that “the model fails to analyze the mechanisms connecting individual/community factors and neighborhood/social factors or how the interaction of these factors leads to violence” (p. 22). How the significance of different factors varies between different cultures, socioeconomic classes or within a country is also unclear. However, when analyzing the combination and particular influence of variables in a given setting, it can aid in the design of intervention and prevention programs (Heise, 1998).

## Intervention levels for the ecological framework

Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott (2004) have used the ecological framework as a base for determining anti-GBV intervention levels, though adapted it so that the social structures and institutional structures are separated into each their level. The four levels that they have identified are: (a) Law and policies; (b) institutional reforms; (c) community level interventions, and; (d) individual behavior strategies. I will use this framework when exploring the different ways in which the organizations interviewed have worked to address GBV within the areas of justice, health, education, social services and socioeconomic development.



## 2.3 Method

Hesse-Biber and Leckenby (2004) underline the interconnectedness of epistemology, methodology<sup>10</sup>, and method, and how they interact cyclically in a research process. In particular, the way we frame out research questions, choose written material and interact with research participants is very much dependent on underlying theories and personal experience. Method is defined as “a technique for (or way of proceeding in) gathering evidence” (Harding, 1987, p. 2). In the following sections I will outline the rationale for using semi-structured interviews as the method in my research, and the experience and challenges in the process.

### 2.3.1 Qualitative research: Semi-structured interviews

Creswell (as cited in Srivastava & Thomson, 2009) defines qualitative research as follows:

Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct and methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or a human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants and conducts the study in a natural setting (p. 73).

As a main feature, qualitative research can be used to better comprehend why and how something occurs (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009). Therefore, I chose the qualitative method of semi-structured interviews for my research, as it would provide me with a basis for analysis and interpretation that is rooted in the lived experiences of people working to address GBV in the given setting.

Semi-structured interviews are open and informal, and follow an interview guide created by the researcher which contains topics and questions that need to be included in the interview (Hardon, Hodkin & Fresle, 2004). Hardon et al. (2004) explain that the order of the questions and themes is not set, so the researcher may guide the direction of an interview according to the flow of the conversation. In addition, the interviewer and the interviewees are free to include themes that are not set in the interview guide, and the interviewer can ask further question regarding a topic to better understand the interviewee’s perspective and to

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<sup>10</sup> Methodology is defined as “a theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed” (Harding, 1987, p. 3).

clarify unclear elements (Hardon et al., 2004). The main point is to gather in-depth information, and as the interview itself and the analysis are quite time-consuming, the number of participants may have to be limited. This can make generalization of findings difficult, but the identified problems or standpoints can serve as base for further research (Hardon et al., 2004).

### 2.3.2 Overview of the fieldwork

The fieldwork in Haiti was conducted within a time-frame of four weeks in the Fall of 2013, between August 27<sup>th</sup> and September 22<sup>nd</sup>. The location was confined to Port-au-Prince, both due to the length of the stay and limitations in the scope of the thesis. Interviews were performed with representatives for eight different local and international organizations in Haiti working to address GBV: YWCA Haiti, KOFAVIV, GARR, the UN Police SGBV Team, RNDDH, Viva Rio, Project Haiti and OBMICA<sup>11</sup>. The research has been approved by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD).

### 2.3.3 The interview information sheet and guide

In accordance with the NSD guidelines, an interview information sheet was made to provide participants with information about who I am and the University I am representing, the purpose of the study, what topics that will be covered during the interview and how the information will be used (Appendix A).

The interview guide was designed to cover areas identified as important during research on relevant literature about GBV in Haiti (Appendix B). It was grouped into four main sections: Gender, VAW, current projects and experiences, and cooperation with other organizations and/or the government. A set of 24 pre-made questions were divided between the sections. The themes and questions were discussed and revised with assistance from my supervisor.

Both the interview information sheet and guide were written in English, and then translated into French by a hired translator. In the event that I would have needed information in Creole, I would have used a local translator in Haiti.

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<sup>11</sup> See p. XIV for a list of the people interviewed and descriptions of each of the organizations. Though all the people interviewed represented the organization they worked for at the time, their views and statements about GBV in Haiti reflect their personal opinions as individuals.

### 2.3.4 The recruitment process

Based on advice received while preparing for the fieldwork, I did not start the recruitment of interviewees before arriving in Haiti.<sup>12</sup> Finding participants was done through a combination of personal referrals from locals and NGO workers, and personally contacting potential organizations and presenting my purpose in Port-au-Prince, using the method of convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is defined as “a type of nonprobability sampling in which people are sampled simply because they are "convenient" sources of data for researchers” (Battaglis, 2008, p. 149). A critique of this method is that it may not obtain participants that are representative of the overall field to which they belong (Battaglis, 2008). However, for the purpose of this thesis and the time allocated for the fieldwork it proved to be the most effective sample method.

Upon arrival, I met with Anne Caroline Tveøy, Country Director for The Norwegian Church Aid in Haiti at the time, who sent out an email presenting me and my research to their partner organizations working with GBV in Haiti. Some of these individuals further put me in contact with potential organizations. Upon completing the initial interviews, I was provided with contact information for additional organizations. Through networking with locals, I was also connected with individuals working with the issue of GBV. The friendliness and willingness to assist me in the research process that I was met with by both locals and NGO workers was very astonishing, and it aided tremendously in completing the research within the timeframe of the fieldwork. However, there were some obstacles that limited the number of interviewees. First, some of the organizations did not have people representing their work regarding GBV available during my stay. Second, one possible participant working with MINUSTAH was unable to go through with the interview due to restrictions for participating in research that will be made publicly available<sup>13</sup>. Third, some organizations did simply not reply to the invitation to participate sent by email. The research sample is therefore selected based on availability, and represents a mix of local and international NGOs, and the UN Police SGBV Team.

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<sup>12</sup> The reason for this was the rapidly changing context in Port-au-Prince and because of the holiday season in the period before I was arriving.

<sup>13</sup> I was informed that the interview would have been approved if the material was to be used in a University assignment for evaluation purposes only.

### 2.3.5 The interview process

All the participants were first given a run through of the interview information sheet, and some additional time to read through it on their own. Once the purpose of the research was clear, I obtained a written consent that they were willing to participate and whether or not they wished to remain anonymous in the final material. One interview was conducted over Skype, where I received an oral confirmation. None of the interviewees opted for anonymity in terms of who they were or the organizations they represented, and I use their names and the organizations they worked with at the time throughout the thesis. The representatives for the organization Viva Rio are referred to as ‘Representatives’. I then asked for permission to record the interviews, which each of the interviewees consented to. In accordance with the standpoint theory, I used an informal and reciprocal method of interviewing, and answered questions from the interviewees in the process. Five of the interviews were held primarily in French, two in English and one in Norwegian. I have fluent proficiency in both English and Norwegian, but only intermediate proficiency in French, which posed a challenge to comfortably engaging in additional questions and themes outside of the interview guide in some of the first French interviews. I informed the interviewees about this before the interviews, and they were all still willing to participate. In two of the interviews conducted in French, there were three representatives from each of the organizations, who all answered the questions together as a group. These two interviews were performed in larger office rooms, where other co-workers came to our assistance if help was needed to find an English or French word.

The amount of detail provided about each theme differed between the participants. I changed some of the questions on the subject of gender slightly after the first interview to better suit the local language and phrases used about the theme. The interviews themselves lasted between 30-60 minutes, with an average of 40 minutes. Six of the interviews took place at the main offices of the organizations, one over Skype, and one was held at the location where I was staying in Port-au-Prince. Some of the organizations also provided a small tour of their facilities, and one organization gave me extra time to meet with one of their project groups.

### 2.3.6 Transcription and translation

The Norwegian and the two English interviews were transcribed by myself upon returning to Norway. The interviews that were conducted primarily in French were transcribed and translated into English by an assistant<sup>14</sup>, who has native proficiency in both French and English.

### 2.3.7 Thematic analysis

To work with the data collected from the interviews, I chose to use thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail” (p. 79). In addition, it is used to also interpret “various aspects of the research topic” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). This method of analysis is not set to a specific theoretical framework, and can therefore be used both within different theoretical frameworks and fields of study (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A *theme* within this method refers to an element within the data that is relevant to the research question(s), and “represents some level of patterned response or meaning” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82) in the collected material.

Three major subjects were set a priori to the analysis that were identified as central to the theory on the subject of GBV and the research questions. Within each section I coded for recurrent themes, which allowed for this part of the analysis to be data-driven. In the written work, the themes have been described and interpreted in relation to relevant theories and material. The section on male-female gender relations also involved an analysis on the latent level, where I went beyond the statements on the subject to find the underlying ideologies and/or historical pathways that may have contributed to forming the current gender relations. Two overarching themes were found to be relevant and interwoven throughout all the data.

## 2.4 Ethical perspectives

Fontes (2004) identifies research regarding VAW as within the sensitive topics research. Sensitive topics research is defined by Lee and Renzetti (1990) as “a topic that may pose a substantial threat to those involved in the research and that therefore makes the collection, holding, and/or dissemination of research data problematic” (p.512). Four criteria

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<sup>14</sup> A data processor agreement was made with the assistant in accordance with the NSD guidelines.

were identified by Lee and Renzetti (1990) as making certain studies on sensitive topics threatening:

- (a) Where research intrudes into the private sphere or delves into some deeply personal experience;
- (b) where the study is concerned with deviance and social control;
- (c) where it impinges on the vested interests of powerful persons or the exercise of coercion and domination; and
- (d) where it deals with things sacred to those being studied which they do not wish profaned (p. 512).

Fontes (2004) states that the first three criteria are met by most VAW research, and the fourth is met when family relations and sexuality are considered sacred. Sieber and Stanely (1988) explain how: “Sensitive research topics are more likely to have applications in the ‘real’ world than society will enthusiastically embrace, irrespective of the validity of the application” (p. 53). When addressing VAW from a multi-level perspective, calling for political, economic and social changes, the proposed changes might not be welcomed by those that benefit from the existing system. It is also important to remember that in places where programs that aim to emancipate women have been implemented, men have reacted negatively to the changing power dimension between men and women (Dini, 2007). The risks that follow such transformations include the possibility for increased violence against women. Men may feel threatened by women’s higher demand for equality, and feelings of frustration and uncertainty may lead to violent behavior (Bradshaw, 2004).

In regard to ethical principles, Fontes (2004) underlines that “with human participants, ethical concerns focus on respect for persons, justice and fairness, beneficence, and non-maleficence” (p. 143). When considering respect for persons, informed consent and voluntariness are essential (Fontes, 2004). As described in the methodology section, all the interviewees were clearly informed about the nature and the purpose of the study in a language they were fluent in, and a written consent was obtained to document their willingness to participate.

CIOMS (as cited in Fontes, 2004) explains that the principle of distributive justice refers to how:

Studies should be designed to obtain knowledge that benefits the class of persons of which the subjects are representative: the class of persons bearing the burden should receive an appropriate benefit, and the class primarily intended to benefit should bear a fair proportion of the risks and burdens of the study (p. 160).

In accordance with the standpoint theory, the purpose of this research is to generate information that can be used to form further social interventions and projects in the area researched, as well as inform others who are not familiar with the subject about its importance and complexity.

Fontes (2004) identifies beneficence as “the provision of benefits and balancing those benefits against the risk of participation” (p. 163). As I did not provide any compensation for participation in my research, the immediate benefit for the participants and their organizations is access to the collected data. The completed MA thesis will be made available in English through DUO, the digital dissemination portal at the University of Oslo. As such, participants in the research can easily access the information and make use of the findings if they so desire. All the participants will be informed through email of where to obtain the thesis, and if they wish they will be provided with a hard-copy.

Non-maleficence basically refers to not doing harm through the research conducted (Fontes, 2004). As I have interviewed people working in organizations that address the issue of GBV, and not the GBV survivors explicitly about their experiences with violence, I have not engaged in collecting material that require an individual to recount their personal and traumatic stories regarding the subject. However, in Haiti, many women that attempt to address the issue of VAW, either through reporting a rape or by working to create changes, have received threats or been physically assaulted (d’Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). During my fieldtrip to Haiti, an interview with an organization had to be postponed as one of their cars carrying a rape victim and a member of their staff was shot at in one of the IDP camps. When I interviewed V. E. Vital (KOFVIV), she described how their coordinator got shot at in her garden door on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 2013, and that her dogs had been poisoned. In addition, she pointed out that there is little help to receive from the Haitian police in such cases (Personal communication, September 17, 2013). Despite this, none of the interviewees required anonymity of their organization, therefore I primarily use their names and the organizations they worked for at the time of the interviews in this thesis. V. E. Vital

(KOFAVIV) further stated “It is risky work, but we are motivated to do it every time we find justice” (Personal communication, September 17, 2013).



# 3 Gender inequality, power and structural violence

## 3.1 Introduction

The analysis of the interviews conducted in Port-au-Prince revealed five themes regarding current cultural attitudes about male-female gender relations, and how these attitudes are reflected and reinforced in the home, economy, politics, laws and regulations, and education. Gender inequality and power will be discussed as overarching subjects together with the ‘script of violence’. The identified themes regarding male-female gender relations are: (a) Men as superior to women, (b) “macho” culture, (c) differing cultural attitudes regarding men and women’s sexuality, (d) cultural acceptance of violence, and (e) gender division of labor. These themes will be explored in relation to the historical formation of male-female gender relations in Haiti. A presentation of expressions of gender inequalities in the home, economy, politics, laws and regulation, and education will follow, viewed within the framework of structural violence. Finally, how the Haitian gender relations are changing will be examined.

## 3.2 Gender relations

It is the cultural interstices of negotiating issues of blood and belonging, location and identity, that consideration of gender and sexuality in the Caribbean must be located.

(Lewis, 2003, p. 2).

Gender is in term a fluid concept, and can only be divided into hypothetical factions based on a need for categorization of behavior based on bodily differences. Joan Scott (as cited in Lewis, 2003) argues that gender can be seen as: “the social organization of sexual difference” (p. 11). When the number of genders is ascribed only to match the sex categories of male and female, and certain behaviors and traits are divided into the categories of masculinity and femininity that are subsequently ascribed to each sex, one creates a gendered system of behavior based merely on sex differences. The terms femininity and masculinity, or

what it means to be a man or a woman, are therefore not fixed entities, but change in relation to “national identity, class, race, religion, ethnicity, etc” (Lewis, 2003, p. 11).

How one becomes conscious of one's gender is a complex socialization process. In societies where gender is divided into men and women, and where masculinity and femininity are binary terms of behavior and traits, Lewis (2007) states that:

Consciousness of one's masculinity (...) emerges out of a constellation of social practices or behaviors of men. It is also connected to an ideology that orients men to an understanding of themselves as gendered subjects for whom society has devised specific roles and expectations. Men are not born with this awareness of themselves. Society must impose this understanding on them. It is very commonly said these days that masculinity is socially constructed, and by this it is meant that not only does the society play a determining role in shaping the general contours of this subjectivity but also that it proceeds through sanctions and rewards to police the boundaries of the identities it establishes. (p. 6).

How masculinity is performed is therefore defined by behaviors approved by other men, as well as in relationship with women. In relationship to women, there are two main, and sometimes contradictory, factors: to gain women's approval and to distinguish themselves from what is considered feminine (Lewis, 2007). Pierre Bourdieu (as cited in Lewis, 2007) has stated that “Manliness, it can be seen, is an eminently relational notion, constructed in front of and for other men and against femininity, in a kind of fear of the female, firstly in oneself” (p. 6). Lewis (2007) underlines that consciousness of one's femininity, “as an ideological practice for women” (p. 7), follows a similar developmental pattern. Opposite to the men, the “hegemonic notions of the feminine conspires to suppress the masculine” in women's behavior (Lewis, 2007, p. 7).

As a result, traditional gender roles become something that a person tries to accomplish through his/her actions to confirm to a cultural or social ideal, rather than an expression of something necessarily inherent or natural (Anderson & Umberson, 2001). Exploring the dominant gender ideologies in a society can assist in explaining current behavior, both of male and female, and highlight how accomplishing gender takes part in influencing violent behavior.

### 3.2.1 Gender inequality and power

During the analysis of the interviews, two overarching subjects were central to all the identified themes regarding male-female gender relations in Haiti: gender inequality and power. Gender inequality is here defined as “allowing people different opportunities due to perceived differences based solely on issues of gender” (Parziale, 2008, p. 978). In accordance with the interviews, Barriteau (2003) argues that analyzing gender involves analyzing multiple dimensions of power, as “power relations underwrite and complicate all relations of gender in the Caribbean” (Barriteau, 2003, p. 5). In this thesis, I use Steven’s (2005) conceptualization of power as dispositional, defined as “an ability or capability of an agent or agents, which they may or may not exercise” (p. 63).

And if you ask me today, are men and women equal? I would say not yet, we are very far from that, but a lot of efforts are being made to make this equality real one day.

(P. Esperance, personal communication, September 3, 2013)

Because it really comes down to that you know. The base for violence is looking at power, power dynamics and gender.

(C. Larkin, personal communication, September 6, 2013)

Here in Haiti there are many disparities between men and women. First, there is an official disparity: It is obvious in the law and in politics, the place devoted to women in public administration and in official decision making. Then there is a social disparity: We can see it inside of a family or in the media who harbor chauvinist and sexist values.

(C. Lespinasse, personal communication, September 20, 2013)

As conveyed in the latter interview quote, men and women experience asymmetric burdens and benefits in Haitian societies due to how gender inequality is expressed and reinforced through social structures and institutions. What separates masculinity and femininity is therefore not only behavior, but also how masculinity is granted disproportionate access to power and privilege (Lewis, 2007). Lewis (2007) claims that “the power that underpins masculinity is particularistic but represents itself as general thus obscuring its influence at some levels and naturalizing or normalizing privilege that does not extend to women” (p. 7).

Statements from the interviewees, such as “men are allowed to do what they want” (C. Larkin, personal communication, September 6, 2013), “In Haiti, it’s about our mentality and culture. Men can do everything they want” (M. Augustin, J. Louis & M. Dorvilier, personal communication, September 10, 2013), and, “they [men] are jealous, and at the same time they think they can do whatever they want and that the women don’t have the right to complain” (P. Esperance, personal communication, September 3, 2013), reflect how belonging to the gender man justifies such naturalized privileges.

However, other dimensions of power also intersect with gender, such as race, class, sexuality and age. The concept of intersectionality, “the multiple forms of oppression based on distinct but overlapping identities” (Schuller, 2014, p. 4) is relevant for all genders. The concept acknowledges differences within groups, such as men or women, and how these differences interact to shape the social experience of belonging to a given group, as well as differing access to power. In regards to achieving gender equality, one interviewee stated that: “Women have asserted their rights, but equality between man and woman is reserved to educated people. Poor women, who don’t know how to read and write, stay in this inequality” (Personal interview 1, September 2013). Concerning Caribbean masculinities, Lewis (2007) points out that many men who are disadvantaged in terms of class or race may not recognize the benefits they hold from a hegemonic masculine privilege, as many people are unaware of the privileges that follow one or more of their identities. As mentioned in the theory chapter, when the effect of a person’s advantaged social situation on his/her acquired beliefs is critically unexamined, he/she is at a disadvantage when generating knowledge about society<sup>15</sup> (Harding, 2004). In the following section, the way in which VAW is perceived and narrated in Haiti is examined.

### 3.2.2 Script of violence

Juan-Charles (2014) defines the ‘Script of violence’ as: “a summation of the ways narratives of violence are culturally produced and socially informed and the ways they ascribe to dominant patterns” (p.9). Juan-Charles (2014) argues that the dominant way in which violence is represented in francophone studies ignores or restricts the issue of rape, which in turn creates “epistemic violence that both conscripts those who are subject to violence and restricts those who theorize violence” (p. 9). General narratives of violence, including feminist presentations, have often framed violence in a de-politicized context (Juan-Charles, 2014). Regarding articles covering GBV in the aftermath of the earthquake, Juan-Charles (as

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<sup>15</sup> See p. 20.

cited in Schuller, 2014) highlights that “the discourse of gender-based violence reproduced troubling, albeit familiar, discourses that trend to trigger either denial or demonization” (p.2). Many of these articles resorted to three viewpoints: blaming the sexual assault survivors, undermining the severity of the problem, or demonizing Haitian men (Schuller, 2014). The inability to construct representations of physical or sexual violence as related to various forms of power, or a denial of its existence by people in authority, further exacerbate the difficulty of understanding and addressing the root causes of GBV (Jean-Charles, 2014).

### 3.3 Understanding the base: Cultural attitudes

When power is defined as dispositional, how people choose to exercise their power is related to social and cultural attitudes of accepted behavior (Steven, 2005). During the interviews in Port-au-Prince, five themes regarding cultural attitudes about male-female gender relations were found: (a) Men as superior to women; (b) “macho” culture; (c) differing cultural attitudes regarding men and women’s sexuality; (d) cultural acceptance of violence, and; (e) gender division of labor. These themes regarding gender match many of the cultural and social attitudes recognized at the macro-level in the ecological framework as risk factors for increasing GBV<sup>16</sup>.

#### 3.3.1 Men as superior to women

Several of the interviewees made statements regarding men’s sense of superiority and domination over women: “The cause of all this sexual violence against women is because they are inferior to men. Men see themselves above us. They can do anything with us. We are considered as objects” (V. E. Vital, personal communication, September 17, 2013), and “there are still many men who think they are superior to women. There is a ‘man domination’ over women” (P. Esperance, personal communication, September 3, 2013). During an interview with H. Skjønshjell (UN Police SGBV Team), it was revealed that some of the male HNP officers they had encountered in their GBV awareness seminars did not consider a man raping his wife a crime (Personal communication, September 10, 2013). Rey (1999) points out that men in Haiti have generally been seen as the owners of women. In Heise’s (1998) ecological framework, male entitlement or ownership of women is one of the identified risk factors at the macro-level for VAW, and it is tied together with historical and religious factors.

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<sup>16</sup> See p. 25.

In the Haiti, as elsewhere, one must take into account the historical and cultural construction of gender relations, in particular colonialism and religious influences (Rey, 1999).

Charles (1995) explains that in the time before the independence, “the transition from slavery to freedom went through a phase of semi-wage, semi-sharecropping that faced strong resistance, particularly from former women slaves” (p. 136) in the south of Haiti. At the time, the women were only paid two-thirds of that of the men for the same type of work, and they demanded pay equality (Charles, 1995). As the gender relations began to be altered, state representatives encouraged the former male slaves to assert their ‘maleness’ to stop the women in their efforts, appealing to the ‘natural division’ between men and women based on physical strength and qualities (Charles, 1995).

The role religion has played in the oppression of women in Haiti is important (Rey, 1999). One interviewee stated that: “Some religions reinforce the vision of man as a chief. Man is the one who dominate and beat. Some priests and ministers preach such violent values” (C. Lespinasse, personal communication, September 20, 2013). Although religion can be an avenue where women can find empowerment and opportunities to change gender relations (Drogus, 1994), one cannot disregard the way people have used religion in facilitating and normalizing men’s superiority in different societies (Rey, 1999). Rey (1999) states that the Catholic Church in Haiti has contributed to the oppression of women by providing a moral basis for the ideologies of motherhood and militarization of society. The ideology of motherhood in Catholic societies is strongly connected to Virgin Mary (Rey, 1999). In Haiti, “where Catholicism is strongly Mariocentric” (Rey, 1999, p.89), the church has been a strong factor in developing women’s acceptance of abuse through portraying suffering as redemptive (Rey, 1999). Catholicism was introduced to the area of New Spain<sup>17</sup> by the use of the sword, which “inextricably links the church to the militarization of Haitian society” (Rey, 1999, p. 88). In addition, the various military regimes in Haiti have benefited from a patron relationship with the church, which have contributed to a sanction of militaristic domination (Rey, 1999). Adams (as cited in Rey, 1999) ties this together with the Christian teachings of forgiveness:

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<sup>17</sup> New Spain: “Spanish viceroyalty 1535–1821 including territory now in SW United States, Mexico, Central America N of Panama, much of the West Indies, & the Philippines” (New Spain, n.d.)

Images of control, authority, and maleness combine in traditional images of God the Father, perpetuating a tradition that sacralizes domination to the point where the victim may conclude that forgiveness is required by her toward all that have hurt her. The religious meaning of sacrifice is thus layered on top of the social view of women as sacrificial. (p. 89-90).

Most Haitian's identify as Catholic (80 percent) or Protestant (16 percent), however, about half of the Haitian population also practices Vodou<sup>18</sup> (CIA, 2014). Vodou is considered less oppressive of women than Catholicism, as women have access to hold positions of spiritual leadership and female Vodou spirits are depicted with qualities that are in contrast to the passive feminine (Rey, 1999). An example is Elizi Freda, one manifestation of the spirit of love and sensuality, which is sexually promiscuous and extravagantly materialistic (Rey, 1999). Although there have been attempts to incorporate certain elements of Vodou in the Haitian Catholic Church, Haitian Christians have taken strong measures to denounce Vodou healing practices and Vodou in general (Rey, 1999). As many Haitians identify as both Christian and Vodouisant, determining the degree of assimilation of gender ideologies of either of the religions, and the impact it has on cultural attitudes, is therefore difficult (Rey, 1999).

The reinforcement of men's domination and women's subordination has been reflected in practices of VAW all through Haiti's history, and the recurrent foreign domination has been a strong factor in transferring international patterns of gender inequalities (Rey, 1999). These factors have interacted with "the maintenance and transformation of certain African cultural practices" (Charles, 1994, p.46) and the multiple male dominated military regimes in Haiti's modern history (Rey, 1999). The concept of the Haitian state as a 'gendered state' will be explored later in this chapter.

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<sup>18</sup> Vodou is defined as: "a creolized religion forged by descendents of Dahomean, Kongo, Yoruba, and other African ethnic groups who had been enslaved and brought to colonial Saint-Domingue (as Haiti was known then) and Christianized by Roman Catholic missionaries in the 16th and 17th centuries. The word Vodou means "spirit" or "deity" in the Fon language of the African kingdom of Dahomey (now Benin)" (Vodou, 2014, para. 1)..

### 3.3.2 “Macho” culture

The question of masculinity in the Caribbean regions in general - very macho attitudes - which only recently have been challenged. And they are still being challenged.

(B. Wooding, personal communication, September 5, 2013).

Two of the interviewees used terms such as ‘macho’ and ‘machoistic’ to describe masculinity in Haiti. Katz (2006) points out that ‘macho’ is a contested term that carries both positive and negative meanings. Originally, the Spanish word ‘macho’ meant “to be well respected, embodying traits such as courage, valor, honor, sincerity, pride, humility, and responsibility” (Katz, 2006, p. 4). This connotation has more or less been lost in mainstream usage, and today ‘macho’ refers predominantly to hyper-masculine aggression (Katz, 2006). In the ecological framework, a masculinity that is linked to aggression and violence is identified a strong risk factor for VAW (Heise, 1998).

The role of media and popular music in reinforcing macho-masculinity and gender discrimination was highlighted by two of the interviewees: “I think media plays a big role. Songs and television play a big role” (C. Larkin, personal communication, September 6, 2013), and “we can see it (...) in the media who harbor chauvinistic and sexist values” (C. Lespinasse, personal interview, September 20, 2013). Katz (2006) describes mass media as a ‘powerful teacher’ and a ‘transmitter of cultural values’ (p. 151). In particular, popular music, such as rap and hip-hop, often serve to reinforce hyper-masculine values (Lewis, 2003). Rose (as cited in Braziel, 2008) explains how hip-hop can be seen as a “cultural form that attempts to negotiate the experiences of marginalization, brutally truncated opportunity, and oppression within the cultural imperatives of African-American and Caribbean history, identity, and community” (p. 169), and Cheney (2005) claims that rap music is a scene for “the social-political struggle for the remasculination of black men” (p. 100). However, the sexism and misogyny that are communicated in a lot of this music do not have a neutral impact. Lewis (2003) points out that the way we often fail to connect the violent language and messages conveyed in such lyrics with how “we relate to each other as social beings” (p. 9) is quite puzzling.



### 3.3.3 Differing cultural attitudes regarding men and women's sexuality

Lewis (2003) states that: "In the Caribbean, sexuality seems to be something that men have and are free to explore, while women are expected to relate to it only defensively" (p. 7). The different cultural attitudes regarding men and women's sexuality in Haiti were expressed by several of the interviewees, using words like 'tacit polygamy' and 'male promiscuity' to describe the generally accepted behavior of men and highlighting how this behavior is not accepted for women:

Men can do everything they want. There are some things that a woman can't do. For example, a man can cheat on his wife. He can have two or three "wives", but if a woman has two boyfriends...OMG! You cannot do that!

(M. Augustin, J. Louis & M. Dorvilier, personal communication, September 10, 2013)

It is culturally acceptable for Haitian men to have several women, it is a kind of tacit polygamy, if you like. (But) it is expected that women are serially monogamous.

(B. Wooding, personal communication, September 5, 2013)

One example of what society tolerates is that a man may have several women, but it is not accepted for a woman to have several men. This is a phenomenon that is common in Haiti, I call it 'male promiscuity'.

(C. Lespinasse, personal communication, September 20, 2013)

At the macro-level in the ecological framework, ridged gender roles is one of the established risk factors for VAW (Heise, 1998). This includes strong cultural norms regarding men and women's sexual behavior, which in most countries are more restrictive for women than men, and the possibility for hostile reactions when women attempt to alter set expectations regarding female sexuality (Armas, 2006). One interviewee stated that: "In the society, if a man goes out with many women, people would say he's a 'gentleman'. It happens that women create jealousy, but it's really more violent when it's the woman who has another 'friend'" (V. E. Vital, personal communication, September 17, 2013). Through the interviews it appears that some sexual freedom for women is culturally accepted, as women may have multiple sex partners in the course of their lifetime as long as they do not engage in several relationships at once. Charles (1994) confirms this in her account of the sexual politics in

Haiti, explaining that “women must formally dedicate themselves to a monogamous relationship even though they may enter serially and consecutively into several kinds of unions” (p. 48), and “(for women) there is a social acceptance of sexuality, as long as the woman observes a strict code of behavior aimed at protecting her reputation, in order to ensure a legal (decent) marriage or a formal common-law conjugality” (p. 47). The unions Charles (1994) refers to here, in addition to common-law conjugal relations and legal marriage, are *rinmin* (to date), *fiyanse* (to be engaged), and *viv avec* (living with). The three latter are similar in that they all involve sexual relations and elements of economic support, but “differ in residence, legal and social standing, and in economic and social obligations” (Charles, 1994, p. 46). Dominant forms of relationships vary between rural and urban settings, as well as in relation to socio-economic class and status (Charles, 1994). It is important to point out that these are first and foremost heterosexual relationships. Cultural attitudes regarding other forms of sexual orientation are still quite conservative, and diversity in sexual orientation or gender identity is generally portrayed as a ‘sin’ by figures in Haitian politics, religion and in the media (MADRE, 2013).

One interviewee mentioned how “women are very much seen as sex objects too” (C. Larkin, personal communication, September 6, 2013). This view is also stated by Rey (1999), who claims that many Haitian men see women as ‘marketable’ and ‘abusable’ objects, a perspective that has long been reflected in Haitian law<sup>19</sup>. The objectification of women is not only a reality in Haiti (Rey, 1999), but has been pointed out by feminists as an important issue in most cultures of the world. Sexual harassment is one of the ways in which the objectification of women takes form. In the Caribbean in general, sexual harassment of women is a common problem, though most men do not recognize their behavior as an issue (Lewis, 2007). As the previous quotes have shown, the gender ideology in Haiti “praises the male’s sexual prowess” (Charles, 1994, p. 48) and thus his expression of this.

### 3.3.4 Cultural acceptance of violence

In this society, it is a man’s right to beat his wife if he is not happy. Sometimes you can even find some women who agree with this. I have had discussions with women

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<sup>19</sup> See p. 51 for a discussion about the structural VAW in Haiti.

who believe that men's violence is a right, but it is getting less people who think this way.

(C. Lespinasse, personal communication, September 20, 2013)

A common theme conveyed by the majority of the interviewees was a cultural acceptance of certain forms of VAW in Haiti. Statements they made include: “[violence] is something that is part of their everyday part of reality, it is so internalized that often they do not see it as a problem necessarily” (B. Wooding, personal communication, September 2013), “violence is a part of all women's reality, both in Haiti and when they migrate” (Personal interview 2, September 2013), and “still now, some women accept that their husbands beat them. They don't denounce the men” (Personal interview 1, September 2013). The acceptance of physical chastisement is also one of the risk factors for VAW recognized at the macro-level in the ecological framework (Heise, 1998). The Haitian Center for Research and Action toward the Advancement of Women (Centre haïtien de recherches et d'actions pour la promotion féminine [CHREPROF]) (as cited in Rey, 1999) published a study in 1996 which found that 80 percent of men in Haiti believed VAW to be acceptable under certain conditions. In particular, 61 percent of the men would justify beating their wife or partner if she was not managing their money right (Rey, 1999).

Many researchers have highlighted the general cultural acceptance of rape in Haiti (Charles, 1994; Duramy, 2014; Jean-Charles, 2014; Rey, 1999). Ismène Zarifis (as cited in Jean-Charles, 2014) points out that “a popular belief in Haiti...is that rape is not a serious crime. Instead, these human rights violations are too often viewed as an accepted part of social behavior” (p. 62). To understand the long standing history of rape of women in Haiti, Jean-Charles (2014) calls for the need to examine ‘the politics of rape’. The politics of rape is defined as linking “politics to power relations, sexual dynamics and social institutions at play in both the reality and representation of rape” (Jean-Charles, 2014, p. 63). Although rape of women connected to an opposition or the conquered have been predominant in Haitian history (Rey, 1999) the presence of, and cultural acceptance of, rape is tied to other factors than political upheaval (Jean-Charles, 2014).

The power dynamics between the local women and occupying forces or peacekeeping forces in facilitating violence is important to take into consideration. One interviewee stated: “That is one thing that has not necessarily been told about the occupation of the US forces,

that there has also been a great deal of violence against women” (B. Wooding, personal communication, September 5, 2013). Both Jean-Charles (2014) and Rey (1999) describe sexual abuses of Haitian women by the US Marines during the US occupation from 1915-34. Satirically, Haitians proposed that USMC could be short for *Use Sans Moindre Contrôle* (use without the least control) (Rey, 1999). MINUSTAH, the current UN peacekeeping force in Haiti<sup>20</sup>, have also been accused of, and proven to, have raped both men and women (Jean-Charles, 2014). Jean-Charles (2014) underlines the irony of ‘protecting’ forces being responsible for sexual abuses, and the general silence surrounding this in narratives regarding VAW in Haiti. D’Adesky and PotoFamn+Fi (2012) highlight how these cases of sexual assault against women receive far less media attention than those of the men. Duramy (2014) discloses how many of the women interviewed for her study on gender and violence in Haiti had a fear of armed men in general, and felt powerless when confronted with such men. One of her interviewees declared that:

Armed men just want to take advantage of beautiful girls...but they also rape old women just for fun and disrespect. You know, they can do whatever they want and have whatever they want, even the very young girls or babies, because they have guns. Guns mean power, and, above all, being a man means having power over women.

(Duramy, 2014, p. 35-36).

Cultural attitudes that accept VAW is also reflected by the way people representing the law deals with such issues. Despite the passing of a rape law in 2005 that made rape a crime, rather than a crime against a woman’s honor (d’Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012), many people’s cultural attitudes have not changed alongside the law:

When a woman decides to lodge a complaint to the police, they trivialize it. Sometimes they even try to reconcile a victim to her rapist. In certain cases they try to fix a wedding between these two. They discard the law which considers rape as a crime.

(C. Lespinasse, personal communication, September 20, 2013).

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<sup>20</sup> See p. 7 for description.

For a long time in Haiti, the penal code treated/ried rape as an honor crime. Feminists struggled to make it judged as a crime and increase penalties. But people's heads have not changed. So for them it's not the child or the woman who is the victim, but the family. Often, the aggressor's family gives money for the reparation, or they try to fix up a wedding. (..) Sometimes parents come to see me, as a human rights organization, just to raise the bids. In this negotiation they try to save the honor and not the integrity of the person.

(C. Lespinasse, personal communication, September 20, 2013).

General attitudes that see a woman's virtuous reputation as an elemental factor for her to get married, result in a lot of sexual abuse to be silenced (Duramy, 2014). One interviewee highlighted this: "In Haiti, people don't denounce violence. A person could suffer from abuses and her problem would never get out of the family" (M. Augustin, J. Louis & M. Dorvilier, personal communication, September 10, 2013).

Two of the interviewees mentioned that the acceptance of violence is not just confined to men's VAW, but also includes elements of women's violence against men. As C. Larkin (YWCA Haiti) stated: "I would also say it's the other way around too, women hitting men. I think it is very much in the culture" (Personal communication, September 6, 2013). Though it might be an issue, the current gender roles makes it shameful for a man to admit that he is being beaten by a woman: "Well, if a wife beats her husband, the husband would never tell anyone! Your wife beat you? That means you are not a man!" (M. Augustin, J. Louis & M. Dorvilier, personal communication, September 10, 2013), which is a different cause for silencing violence than it is for women. In Duramy's (2014) book *Gender and Violence in Haitit: Women's Path from Victims to Agents*, she examines Haitian women's participation in violence in Haiti. Women's expressions of aggression do not fit the submissive gender role they are ascribed in society, and women's violent behavior is often downplayed in narratives about armed violence (Duramy, 2014). Research shows that Haitian women and girls are active participants in *milices populaires* (popular organizations), armed criminal gangs, and Brigades de Vigilance (vigilante groups), where they engage in kidnappings, violence and other criminal activities (Duramy, 2014). Some of these groups are made up by only women, and such groups in Port-au-Prince have been responsible for both kidnappings and sexual violence (Duramy, 2014).

An acceptance of men's violence against men was not referred to in any of the interviews, but it has been highlighted in other research as a general problem in the region (Lewis, 2007).

However, even with a pervasive cultural acceptance of certain forms of violence, there is also diversity in people's attitudes:

It is clear that people have very different attitudes. It was a course (HNP GBV training) where they were discussing whether it was illegal for a man to rape his wife, and then some people believed that this was completely legal, whereas others were against it.

(H. Skjønsvell, personal communication, September 10, 2013).

The latter quote shows that the dominant gender ideologies are by far not absolute. There have been changes in the level of gender inequality due to the efforts of feminists and local and international actors (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012) and these will be explored later in this chapter.

### 3.3.5 Gender division of labor

Also in Haiti, in some jobs you cannot find any women. In construction – woman can be a dressmaker - but not a builder. These are jobs restricted to men. Anyone could be a dressmaker, a man could sew a cloth, it is not a problem. But you would never see a woman as a construction supervisor. Until now, things are still like that.

(M. Augustin, J. Louis & M. Dorvilier, personal communication, September 10, 2013).

A central theme in the majority of the interviews was the gender division of labor in Haiti. The gender division of labor, both in the household and public market, is defined as the socio-cultural division of activities and roles between men and women, “beyond the biological imperatives of biological reproduction” (Smith & Frost, 2006, p. 420). As mentioned previously in this chapter, rigid gender roles are risk factors for VAW in the ecological framework, and this is also reflected in the area of work (Heise, 1998). The quote at the start of this section demonstrates the presence of certain cultural perspectives about the type of jobs men and women can hold, or given access to, in the public labor market in

Haiti<sup>21</sup>. This is generally a predominant pattern in most places in the world (True, 2012). In addition, women are the ones responsible for the majority of household labor and cultural reproduction (Schuller, 2014). Charles (1994) states that: “Men will only perform ‘female’ tasks under extraordinary conditions, like childbirth, illness, prolonged absence of the woman from home, or when other kinswomen are not available” (p. 47). Two of the interviewees describe this situation as follows:

Women have a huge social responsibility. They are the ones to raise children and to look after their education. They take care of the sick, find and cook food, fix the house and they also need to make money. In a lot of countries women stay at home and men go to work and bring back the income. Here women do both.

(C. Lespinasse, personal communication, September 20, 2014).

There is a saying, if you say *poto mitan*, the pole that holds everything, they are the center. And that is true, the women carry the workload, they are the ones that are responsible for the kids, for feeding their husband, for cooking, for cleaning, for working often.

(C. Larkin, personal communication, September 6, 2014).

How the gender division of labor affects women’s role in the Haitian economy and vulnerability to violence will be explored in the following section.

### 3.4 Sites for expression and reinforcement: The home, economy, politics, laws and regulations, and education

There are multiple sites where gender inequalities are reflected and reinforced, and the interviewees pointed out five areas in Haiti in particular: (a) the home; (b) economy; (c) politics; (d) laws and regulations, and; (e) education. Farmer (as cited in Fadlalla & Stein, 2012) has coined systematically induced violence as ‘structural violence’, defined as:

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<sup>21</sup> See p. 80 for a description of some current projects that work to train women in predominantly male-dominated trades.

Social arrangements that put individuals and populations in harm's way...The arrangements are structural because they are embedded in the political and economic organization of our social world; they are violent because they cause injury to people (p.18).

Exploring GBV involves looking into how gender interacts with both the local and global context, and the distribution of resources, privileges and decision making power in society (True, 2012).

### 3.4.1 The home

Several of the interviewees highlighted the centrality of the home in the expression and formation of gender inequality:

In my opinion, men and women are equal. But in this sexist society, we favor men over women. From time immemorial things are like that, we evolved, but this is still the same. Even in the family we give the priority to little boys over little girls.

(Representatives, personal communication, September 5, 2013)

Even in the family, when a mother has two children - a girl and a boy – the mother has the habit to tell the little girl to always stay at home to do this and that, while the little boy is allowed to go out anytime. It starts like this, inside the family. We give most of the food and all of the best part of the meat to the boys rather than the girls.

(V. E. Vital, personal communication, September 17, 2013)

The socialization of children includes not only the development of valued skills, “but also (to) shape the child to be a certain kind of cultural *person* with an appropriate self and identity” (Weisner, 2003, p. xiv). The household is the first social structure where power, authority and conflict begin to form our gender relations (Duramy, 2014). The two latter quotes from the interviewees provide examples of how a cultural belief in boys and men as superior to girls and women is reinforced within a family. As discussed in the previous section regarding male-female gender relations, the household is also a domain that shape attitudes about men's and women's sexuality and violence, and where the gender division of labor begins to take form.



Young girls and women are the ones that have the most responsibility for domestic chores, and therefore spend more time in the house (Duramy, 2014). The location of the family, or the home, is therefore a source of violence for many girls and women in Haiti, as sexual violence committed by family members, intimates or neighbors is often allowed to go on unnoticed (Duramy, 2014). When a girl or a woman do disclose the abuse, Duramy (2014) states that the act is often met with disregard, and even hostility for revealing such aggressions, by their family and the local community. Research on GBV in general reveal how “contemporary constructions of gender hold women responsible for men’s aggression” (Anderson & Umberson, 2001, p. 368), and to blame the sexual assault survivor is thus not an issue confined to Haiti.

Gender inequality is also expressed in how parents often give girls and boys unequal access to education (Schuller, 2014). The percentage of women aged 25 and above with at least some secondary education is 22.5, whereas the percentage for men is 36.34 (UNDP, 2014). In 2000, the illiteracy rate for women was 43.3 percent and 33.4 for men (Verner, 2008). By giving preference to boys over girls, the girls are at a disadvantage in attaining jobs and access to positions of power later in life, and are vulnerable to other forms of discrimination (Schuller, 2014).

As gender inequality begins to take form in the household, it is an important location to start making changes. One interviewee pointed out:

We have to do something at the beginning. For example, we give toys to kids. The little girl plays to cook, to look after babies, to do the cleaning etc. For little boys it’s different, and it’s here we have to make a change. *If the little girl can do the dishes, then the little boy can do it too. And if the little boy can be president, the little girl too!*  
(Representatives, personal communication, September 5, 2013).

### 3.4.2 Economy

Schuller (2012) uses the phrase ‘feminization of poverty’ when describing the unequal poverty rates for men and women in Haiti. A feminization of poverty is a result of many interwoven elements, including women’s main responsibility for child rearing (McLanahan, Sorensen & Watson, 1989). Several of the interview participants underlined that economic factors were a central reason for VAW in Haiti, using statements such as: “I think the

economic condition is the main factor [for violence]. Sometimes jealousy could be a reason for a crime of passion, but in general the reason for violence is the bad economy” (Representatives, personal communication, September 5, 2013), and: “Power inequality, lack of power, lack of finances, lack of ability to have choice to feed your children, I think that is huge” (C. Larkin, personal communication, September 6, 2013). It was also pointed out that economic factors affect women’s vulnerability to violence all through their life cycle:

Any age, it is an economic problem. Sexual exploitation, youth exploitation, under legal age, the kids with nothing are exploited by people with money. For example, it happens in Haiti that we see a 17 year old girl going out with a 40 or 50 year old man. It is not about love, but about economy, money and poverty.

(P. Esperance, personal communication, September 3, 2013).

The labor force participation rate of people at the age of 15 and over is 70.8 percent for men and 60.6 percent for women (UNDP, 2014). The gender division is in many ways twofold: by sector, as well as by access to power and decision-making positions. International neo-liberal policies are part of shaping Haitian women’s reality, as such policies influence the distribution resources in a society and what form of employment that is available to women (Schuller, 2014). In 1999, 81.7 percent of the workers in commerce, petty trade and restaurants were female (Gardella, 2006). As a contrast, Schuller (2014) states that women represent only 11 percent in the professional private sectors, and 4 percent in the public sector. A UNICEF (as cited in Gardella, 2006) study from 1993 found that almost double as many women than men in the formal sector were in the lowest revenue level. The same study found that more women than men in the informal sector were also at the lowest levels of income (Gardella, 2006). However, it is important to note the differing access to resources based on class, as Haiti

The gender division of labor renders women responsible for the household and children in addition to formal work (Schuller, 2014). Having the main care take responsibility of children and little access to resources was described as a factor that increases women’s risk of experiencing violence:

A lot of women don't report a complaint. The economy is one of the reasons of women's silence. When the husband is the principal source of income in the family and he is violent, she is afraid to complain because she is not sure about getting any money to feed her children. All of these kinds of survival questions come into the woman's mind and she stays quiet. Some of them die because they stay alone and shut their mouth.

(Representatives, personal communication, September 5, 2013).

In some cases a man forces his partner to have unprotected sexual relations – the woman has to agree because it is the man who provides money to feed the family. I had this case of a woman who knew that the man had relationships with other women affected by HIV/AIDS. She did not want to have sex with him, but then he stopped providing food for the kids, so she had to accept.

(C. Lespinasse, personal communication, September 20, 2013).

Another important element of Haitian society is the practice of *restavék*, which means 'to stay with,' and the high number of children and young people living on their own (Duramy, 2014). With little social support networks, these young people are more vulnerable to violence (Duramy, 2014):

In Port-au-Prince alone, many many youth live away from their parents today because this is seen as a place where there is more opportunity than living out in the countryside, and an opportunity to go to school. So kids are already living on their own, or with a friend, or with a family member, but (...) not having much of a social safety net.

(C. Larkin, personal communication, September 6, 2013).

One interviewee explains: "There is also the question of a very corrupt society in Haiti. Sexual favors may be given to provide advancement in one way or another" (B. Wooding, personal interview, September 5, 2013). As many disaster researchers have pointed out, disasters do not take place in a political and social vacuum, and how services are provided can deepen existing power relations (Enarson, 1998). Schuller (2014), IJDH et al (2010) and d'Adesky and PotoFamn+Fi (2012) are among the researchers that describe the occurrence of

transactional sex after the earthquake. Several of the interviewees highlighted the issue, describing how men that were in charge of handing out food cards or were in charge of other humanitarian services demanded sexual favors from women in order to assist them. This includes statements such as: “Some men promised to give food or hygienic equipment in exchange for sex, and people were in need so prostitution became a huge phenomenon. This promoted the violence” (Representatives, personal communication, September 5, 2013), and “obviously economic precariousness may make women more vulnerable to giving sexual favors, like I said, for advancement and the issue of getting by” (C. Lespinasse, personal communication, September 20, 2013).

Petrozziello and Wooding (2012) underline that there are several reasons for women’s migration to the Dominican Republic, including political instability and the 2010 earthquake. However, most of the interviewees cited poverty as the main reason for women’s migration: “I think the migration is because of economic reasons” (Representatives, personal communication, September 5, 2013), and; “It is poverty which is the first cause of migration. Some women get away because they can’t accept the violence anymore, but it is mainly because of the economic situation” (C. Lespinasse, personal communication, September 20, 2013). Further, C. Lespinasse (GARR) describes the border as a “violence zone” (personal communication, September 20, 2013). The difficulties that Haitian women face when they migrate are expressed by B. Wooding (OBMICA):

Gender inequality transfers from Haiti to the Dominican Republic in the migrant population...those difficulties that Haitian women face in Haiti are multiplied when they come to the DR, because though there is a more enabling legislation even Dominican women have difficulties accessing it. And migrant women have extra levels of vulnerability – their migration status, how they can deal with the violence, deal with a number of those kind of issues.

(Personal communication, September 5, 2013).

### 3.4.3 Politics

Exclusion of women and marginalized men from participation in the major decision-making processes - political and corporate - of the society is also a form of violence.

(Lewis, 2007, p.16)

In 2013, women held only 3.5 percent of the seats in parliament (UNDP, 2014). This reflects what C. Lespinasse (GARR) called an ‘official disparity’: “it is obvious in the law and in politics, the place devoted to women in public administration and in official decision-making” (Personal communication, September 20, 2013). Charles (1995) describes the Haitian state as a ‘gendered state,’ a term which also refers to how the state discriminates against – and excludes – women. From the independence in 1804, this has been a central feature of Haitian politics (Charles, 1995), which is also expressed in laws and regulations.

#### 3.4.4 Laws and regulations

Lewis (2007) described that: “Violence has to do with the deprivation of rights” (p. 16). In Haiti, barriers, such as corruption and impunity, in addition to a lack of laws and regulations that protects the needs of women, take part in forming women’s vulnerability to violence. In particular, Jagannath et al. (2011-2012) state that many women, and Haitians in general, are excluded from asserting rights due to costly court proceedings and language barriers.<sup>22</sup>

The following quotes from the interviewees exemplify some of the problem areas within the Haitian law:

For an adult, even if the justice doesn’t work properly, the victim can try to be heard. As an organization of human rights, we can support an adult approach. A child depends on a legal guardian. It is not allowed to lodge a complaint as a third organization if we are not directly concerned. If the person who has the legal custody of the child does not have the conscience to go to the court, nobody else can do anything. A law about violence should allow an organization to lodge a complaint. In other countries, the state is responsible for the children.

(C. Lespinasse, personal communication, September 20, 2013)

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<sup>22</sup> “Proceedings are conducted in French, which most Haitians do not speak” (Jagannath et al., 2011-2012, p. 11).

There are a lot of men here that do not take responsibility when they when they have children. They have kids with 3 to 4 women and they do not look after them. There is no constraint in the law to force them to take responsibility.

(C. Lespinasse, personal communication, September 20, 2013)

The law in Haiti forbids a married man to acknowledge the child of his mistress. So in many cases, everyone knows who the kid is from, but nobody can do anything about it because the father is already committed to marriage. This kid cannot get any benefits, and this leads to discrimination between children. I know some families where the children from the legal marriage go to school and relieve their hunger, and on the other side the children from a non-marital relationship do not have anything to eat. *These are big inequalities kept by a hypocritical society and by certain laws.*

(C. Lespinasse, personal communication, September 20, 2013)

### 3.4.5 Education

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the difference in girls' and boys' access to education begins with cultural attitudes in the home that favor boys' schooling over that of girls'. Though education is considered a human right within the Haitian Constitution, Schuller (2012) describes that about 500,000 children in Haiti do not have access to education. In addition, education costs money, and "the high cost of education – combined with poverty and income inequality – exacerbates gender inequality" (Schuller, 2012, p. 35).

Women's and girl's vulnerability to sexual assault is also expressed within the structure of the school. C. Lespinasse (GARR) underlined that: "There are schools where teachers have unacceptable sexual relations with girls" (Personal communication, September 20, 2013).

## 3.5 Changing gender relations

Though gender inequality is an important issue in Haiti today, many of the interviewees described how things had – and were – changing: "Over time things change" (M. Augustin, J. Louis & M. Dorvilier, personal communication, September 10, 2012); "Before men used to

mistreat women without anyone knowing about it. Nobody used to lodge a complaint to the police, we thought it was normal to be beaten. The work of the ministers and women helped a lot to improve the situation” (Representatives, personal communication, September 5, 2013); “There are many issues about equality between men and women, [but] we have to admit that a lot of improvement has been made, especially thanks to the feminist organizations” (P. Esperance, personal communication, September 3, 2013), and; “Now, if you go to Haiti University, you would see much more girls than boys! Yes, a lot more!” (M. Augustin, J. Louis & M. Dorvilier, personal communication, September 10, 2012).

Such changes are part of breaking down existing gender barriers, however, change in the set order of things is not always welcomed by all groups. M. Augustin, J. Louis & M. Dorvilier (Project Haiti) describe how men complain that their wives have changed after they have attended programs with the organization. They also stated that: “Men are authoritarian and they try to keep things like they were in the past” (Personal communication, September 10, 2013). Lewis (2003) highlights that it is not so much about the fact that women are outperforming men in certain areas, but more about women not adhering to how they are ‘supposed to’ behave. Jane Flax (2004) describes this situation:

The generalized usefulness of gender contributes to the often surprising difficulty of changing gender relations. Feminist attempts to alter gender relations stir up intense anxieties and threaten many apparently unrelated aspects of psychological and social organization. People may feel driven to protect existing gender relations by an unconscious fear of disrupting basic ways of organizing life (p.63).

None the less, the interviewees expressed that it is time for changes:

Now it’s the time of empowerment of women. We are all equal, we are all the same. I think it’s evolving. Before, girls could only go to school until “brevet des collèges” [junior certificate] and then they had to go to sewing school. Not many women learned philosophy or used to go to university, but now we can see that there are women in all the institutions, in the government, in the private businesses, in the Parliament. Seeing women work there is a big change. We are moving on.

(Representatives, personal communication, September 5, 2013).

### 3.6 Conclusion

Gender relations are central elements of a society's social structure. Values ascribed to different genders are culturally constructed, and by exploring the existing cultural attitudes about male-female gender relations one can identify the different beliefs that uphold power inequalities between men and women. The different cultural attitudes that were revealed in the interviews reinforced the notion of men as superior to women and masculinity as linked to being 'macho.' Overall, men are provided with greater freedom than women and they are met with more cultural acceptance when it comes to topics like sexuality or violence. This is expressed in many structures in Haiti, including the home, economy, politics, laws and regulations and education.



## 4 Addressing gender based violence: The government, international aid and NGOs

### 4.1 Introduction

The area of development in Haiti is a contested field (Schuller, 2012), and in this chapter I will discuss general theories of development and explore the experiences of different organizations working to address GBV in Haiti. First, development in Haiti, both before and after the 2010 earthquake, will be explored. In addition, different theories of including women and gender in development work will be outlined. Morrison et al., (2004) have used the ecological framework as a base for their categorization of intervention levels, and I use this frame for presenting how the interviewed organizations were working on multiple levels to address GBV. The four levels that they have identified are: (a) Law and policies; (b) institutional reforms; (c) community level interventions, and; (d) individual behavior strategies. Additional themes that were identified in the interviews, such as the need for a diversity of strategies, cooperation and networking between NGOs, and challenges, will be explained. Finally, how social change is in part fueled by a desire to share learned experiences will be discussed.

### 4.2 Development in Haiti

The earthquake that hit Haiti on January 12<sup>th</sup> 2010 resulted in a great humanitarian catastrophe, killing over 200,000 people<sup>23</sup> (Jagannath et al., 2011-2012). A massive humanitarian response followed the disaster, “with countries, multilateral institutions, NGOs (...), charitable institutions, evangelical missions, associations of every kind, celebrities, and every kind of organization from what could be called ‘the charity business sector’” (Vorbe, 2012, p. 59) turned their focus to Haiti. Private donations amounted to about \$2 billion, with 1.4\$ billion from the US alone (Schuller & Morales, 2012a). In March 2010, \$5.3 billion were pledged by 58 donor agencies for emergency relief, recovery and reconstruction incentives (Schuller & Morales, 2012a). Despite the initial international response and commitment, the

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<sup>23</sup> For more information see p. 6.

post-quake recovery process has been deemed a ‘failed disaster response’ (Katz, 2013, p. 283). In addition, an outbreak of cholera in October 2010 further complicated the situation (Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) & World Health Organization (WHO), 2014). Since the outbreak, there have been 711,442 cholera cases and it is estimated that 8,646 people have died as a direct result (PAHO & WHO, 2014). Katz (2013) described that by the end of 2010, the humanitarian relief spending amounted to \$2.43 billion, of which 93 percent were used for paying for UN or NGO supplies and personnel, or remained in the donor states. Another \$151 million, about six percent, could not be traced (Katz, 2013). In addition, Katz (2013) stated that “just 1 percent – slightly more than \$24 million – went to the Haitian government” (p. 204). The failed disaster response was due to many factors in the coordination and deliverance of the humanitarian aid (Katz, 2013). However, in order to understand how this could happen, Schuller (2012) underlines the need to look at the general history of development in Haiti.

An estimated 10,000 NGOs were working in Haiti before the earthquake, leaving Haiti with the world’s highest rate of NGOs per capita (Edmonds, 2012). Katz (2013) states that in the period from 1998 to 2008, a minimum of \$4.8 billion were spent on Haiti aid by donor countries. Compared to other aid recipients, this was twice the world average (Katz, 2013). In addition to this, donor countries were spending about \$500 million yearly on MINUSTAH after its implementation in 2004 (Katz, 2013). Despite this, Haiti “ranked 158 out of 187 countries on the UN Human Development Index and lurked at or near the bottom of nearly every social and economic indicator in the world” (Katz, 2013, p. 10). To understand this contradiction between the amount of money donated and the tangible outcomes in Haitian people’s lives, it is important to look at exactly how the money was spent (Katz, 2013). Donor countries began to circumvent governments of recipient countries in the 1980s, and instead transferred funds directly to NGOs (Schuller & Morales, 2012b). In 1995, the US Congress no longer allowed USAID funds to be allocated directly to the Haitian government, and other donors followed their lead (Schuller & Morales, 2012b). Though there has been little transparency in who received the money and how it was used, it is estimated that out of the \$683 million that was donated in 2007, nine percent was given as budget support to the Haitian government (Katz, 2013). Further, between \$307 million and \$604 million were divided between NGOs and foreign private contractors “who may have delivered some of that money to Haiti in the form of local subcontracts, or material, or not at all” (Katz, 2013, 10). A

lot of this was used for short term initiatives and supplies which gave the economic benefit to suppliers and corporations outside of Haiti (Katz, 2013).

Though Haiti is a complex and challenging country to work in due to the political climate, levels of poverty and the vested interests of powerful actors, some of the reasons for the lack of progress can also be linked to structural problems, both within NGOs and in the system in which they are working (Schuller, 2012). Schuller (2012) has identified four main problem areas: (a) instrumentalism eroding participation; (b) communication; (c) collaboration, and; (d) coordination. Regarding the first area, Schuller (2012) writes: “NGOs have become instrumentalized – used for ends other than humanitarian – as they have become more attractive to donors” (p. 174). Originally, NGOs were established as private, voluntary and/or faith based organizations that received most of their funding from within their faith community (Schuller, 2012). After the Cold War, major donors, such as USAID and the World Bank, no longer needed to fund states to fight the influence of the Soviet bloc, and started to transfer their funds to NGOs directly (Schuller, 2012). This shift from state funding to NGOs reflects distrust in oftentimes weak and corrupt recipient governments, as well as the influence of neoliberal ideologies and geopolitical struggles (Schuller, 2012). This also lead to an increase in NGO programs, and Schuller (2012) describes how “during the decade before 1996, the number of NGOs working in more than one country more than doubled to thirty-eight thousand” (p. 175). Preferences for results-based management often lead to a decrease in local participation as the decision-making authority became more centralized within the organization (Schuller, 2012). By sacrificing participation to accommodate donor priorities thus made making changes from the bottom up significantly more difficult (Schuller, 2012). In terms of communication, very demanding reporting requirements were also contributing to reducing communication within the NGOs (Schuller, 2012). With such requirements many NGOs became more ‘top heavy’ with bigger administrations (Schuller, 2012). A focus on demands from the donors to maintain funding made NGOs “more concerned with accountability from above, not below” (Schuller, 2013, p.176). In the event that a project fails, the recipients have little to say (Schuller, 2012). On one level, this in turn leaves NGOs as competitors for funding and gives little incentive to cooperate with each other (Schuller, 2012). Schuller (2012) states that the tendency of donors to undermine the government also discourages reporting to and cooperation with the state.

The experiences of the organization interviewed do not entirely reflect the structural challenges that Schuller (2014) has identified, though some elements are present. All the interviewees stated that their organizations' projects were established and further developed based on seen needs within the population they are serving. Throughout the analysis of the interviews, it became clear that the majority of the organizations cooperated with other NGOs, and participated in networks and sharing of information. In particular, other NGOs were often contacted or consulted when there was a need for services or competence in other areas than the given NGO had. A recurrent theme was also a wish to cooperate with the MCFDF. The responses from the government had been mixed, varying from being turned down, given interest, receiving money for research, and in the case of the UN Police SGBV Team, given full support. An exception is the Human Rights Defense Network (RNDDH in French) that monitors corruption and impunity within the government, and does thus not cooperate with the government in any way (P. Esperance, personal communication, September 3, 2013). The programs and experiences of these organizations will be further explored later in this chapter.

#### 4.2.1 Gender and development

There have been several theories of working with women and gender in development, and the two most central have been WID (women in development) and GAD (gender and development) (Connelly, Lee, McDonald & Parpart, 2000). In the 1970s, research showed that development projects failed to both include women and take into account their indirect effects on women (Connelly et al., 2000). The underlying belief that 'modernization' incentives would automatically improve gender equality was challenged by women working with development, which led to the WID approach (Connelly et al., 2000). This framework views the absence of women in development as the issue, and that by integrating women into the development process, the problem of gender inequality can be solved. By focusing on practical gender interests that arise out of given conditions, such as food, shelter, education and health, the impact of power relations formed by race, class and gender are not taken into account (Connelly, Lee, McDonald & Parpart, 2000). Highly depoliticized, these issues tend to be addressed by immediate and specific solutions, such as providing food and education for women. Though these needs are important, this approach fails to alter the fundamental factors that form existing roles and relationships (Parpart, 1995; Connelly et al., 2000).

In the 1980s, the emergence of GAD offered a more optimistic approach for change. The GAD framework presents a broader strategy that is gender-sensitive and includes the issues of both men and women (Connelly et al., 2000). Socially constructed power relations based on race, class and gender - both local and global - are included when identifying obstacles to equitable development. In addition to the short-term practical gender interests, GAD also addresses the more long-term strategic gender interests (Connelly et al., 2000). Strategic gender interests incorporate the goal of gender equality and aim to transform the structures and relationships that subjugate women. This happens through initiatives such as consciousness-raising, providing education and political mobilization (Connelly et al., 2000).

Further theories based on concepts of equity (Connelly et al., 2000) and culture (Chua, Bhavnani & Foran, 2000) have been proposed as new alternatives to the existing framework. The women, culture and development (WCD) approach defines culture as women's lived experiences, including social processes and the inter-relationship between production and reproduction (Chua et al., 2000). Through this framework a woman's struggles and agency are highlighted within their local and international context (Chua et al., 2000). Race, class, gender, sexuality, religion and age are integral aspects of a woman's life, and are therefore included in the WCD approach (Chua et al., 2000). A WCD analysis would include the dynamic relationships between all personal and institutional forms of inequality, and propose a form of politics that include all women and men (Chua et al., 2000). Development would thus entail a process of rebuilding local, national, and international relationships. Women would have to decide on what practices they value within their culture and which ones that only serve to uphold inequalities (Townsend, 1999).

The continuously developing theories relating to gender, power and development highlights the role of relationships on multiple levels, from the global to the personal, in forming social and institutional structures. It is therefore important to understand the unequal power distribution in these relationships, and to find avenues for dialogue in order to facilitate change. Steven (2005) states that:

We need to know our own powers and those of others in order to find our way around a world populated by human agents, individual and collective, of whose powers we need to be apprised if we are to have a chance of surviving and flourishing (p. 65).

## 4.3 Four levels: Addressing GBV in Haiti

The interviewed organizations were working on multiple levels to address GBV in Haiti. In this section, I will explore some of their identified problem areas, advocacy efforts and programs within the intervention levels developed by Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott (2004). Morrison et al., (2004) have used the ecological framework as a base for their categorization, though adapted it so that the social structures and institutional structures are separated into each their level. The four levels that they have identified are: (a) Law and policies; (b) institutional reforms; (c) community level interventions, and; (d) individual behavior strategies. In addition, the need for a diversity of strategies, cooperation and networking between NGOs, and challenges, will be discussed.

### 4.3.1 Laws and policies

Change is much more likely to take place in a legislative environment conducive to gender equality than one in which there is no institutional will to make this happen.

(Lewis, 2007, p. 9)

Morrison et al., (2004) have provided a list with a set of recommendation for objectives and specific initiatives to address GBV within the level of laws and policies. Some of these include:

- Increase investment in women's social and economic development and political participation.
- National and international advocacy campaigns.
- Ratification of international human rights agreements and—where ratified—improvement in implementation.
- Revision of relevant provisions of the civil, family and criminal code.
- Specific legislation on family, domestic or sexual violence, as well as resources required for its implementation.
- Legal tools such as protection orders.
- Revised laws and policies to improve women's economic rights to property and inheritance, and to reduce discrimination against women and girls.
- Multi-sectoral national or state plans for addressing GBV.

- Policies mandating comprehensive social, medical and legal services for survivors of GBV.
- To strengthen legal and administrative sanctions against sexual harassment in schools.

Duramy (2014) writes that within international law, women's rights can generally be divided into two different categories: nondiscriminatory norms and measures to protect from GBV. Haiti has ratified several international treaties regarding the protection of both women and children (Duramy, 2014). As mentioned in the introduction,<sup>24</sup> these include CEDAW and Convention of Belém Do Para, which explicitly commits Haiti to establish policies and practices that protect women from GBV (Duramy, 2011). In addition, Haiti ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 in 1995, which prohibits gender based discrimination of children and “provides that State Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social, and educational measures to protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or maltreatment, including any form of sexual abuse and exploitation” (Duramy, 2014, p. 73). Within national legislation, Haiti adopted the Decree Changing the Regulation of Sexual Aggression and Eliminating Forms of Discrimination against Women<sup>25</sup> in 2005. This decree recognized that the existing Haitian Penal Code regarding rape was discriminatory against women as it reflected a view of sexual assault as a crime against honor rather than against the sexual assault survivor's “physical integrity and well-being” (Duramy, 2014, p. 81). Subsequently, article 278 of the Haitian Penal Code considering ‘Sexual Aggressions’ was amended, making rape or any form of sexual aggression punishable with up to ten years of forced labor (Duramy, 2014). In 2003, Haiti adopted the Statue Related to the Interdiction and the Elimination of All Forms of Abuse, Violence, Maltreatment, and Inhumane Treatment Against Children<sup>26</sup>, reflecting many of the elements within the Convention of the Rights of the Child 1989 (Duramy, 2014). However, despite having implemented such legislations little has changed in praxis, and women and children in Haiti continue to experience structural abuses (Duramy, 2014). As discussed in chapter 3 regarding cultural attitudes about violence,<sup>27</sup> many people's attitudes have not changed in accordance with the amendment of the laws, both among the public and

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<sup>24</sup> See p. 16.

<sup>25</sup> *Decret Modifiant le régime des agressions sexuelles et éliminant en la matière les discriminations contre la femme.*

<sup>26</sup> *Loi relative à l'interdiction et à l'élimination de toutes forms d'abus, de violences, de mauvais traitements ou traitements inhumains contre les enfants.*

<sup>27</sup> See p. 46.

within the state structures. Therefore, it becomes essential to have human rights organizations who work to promote and protect human rights, and to monitor the state. RNDDH and the Support Group to Repatriates and Refugees (GARR in French) are organizations that work both with assisting victims of violence and to educate people at different levels in society about the importance of human rights. While the state in Haiti is often the source of violations of human rights (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012), it became clear in the analysis of the interviews that monitoring the government *and* being open to maintaining a dialogue with decision-making authorities are necessary steps to facilitate change. P. Esperance (RNDDH) explained: "(...) we have programs of monitoring. In these programs, we observe state institutions who have a key role: judicial system, penitentiary authorities, police and other authorities. We do systematic reports about the situation of human rights in Haiti" (Personal communication, September 3, 2013). Regarding communication, C. Lespinasse (GARR) stated: "We are trying to get much dialogue with local authorities, we want to stop the indifference of the councils and judges. We get in contact with them to initiate cooperation" (Personal communication, September 20, 2013). The Bureau des Avocats Internationaux (BAI), a law firm that operates out of Port-au-Prince, applies similar strategies (Jagannath et al., 2011-2012). Jagannath et al. (2011-2012) describe how such "political pressure helps advance cases through the courts and compel a judicial response" (p. 10).

One area within the law that is important to address is sexual rights. P. Esperance (RNDDH) stated that a focus on the rights of the LGBT population is a new focus area for his organization: "Now there is something new with the law: LGBT<sup>28</sup> (...) rights. Today in Haiti, there are about three or four organizations that work to protect the rights of homosexuals, and we work with them too" (Personal communication, September 3, 2013). Sexuality is a contested area of non-heterosexual men and women's lives, as well as women's lives in general (Chua et al., 2000). Sexuality refers to "sexual meanings, practices, identities and experiences, and is mediated through bodies, ideologies, institutions and cultures," (Chua et al, 2000, p. 830). Sexual rights are defined as a person's right to decide on all matters connected to one's sexuality, free from any form of coercion or discrimination (Cabezas, 2005). This definition encompasses reproductive rights, sexual orientation and a person's rights both within and outside of marriage (Cabezas, 2005). Sexual rights must be included in

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<sup>28</sup> Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender.



the human rights framework to ensure a person's full control over his/her own body (Cabezas, 2005).

Protective legislative frameworks within many areas are essential to address the multiple factors that contribute to uphold gender inequalities, including the health sector and in education. In addition, a central theme of women's vulnerability to violence in the interviews and in the relevant literature was tied to women's role as the primary caretaker of children,<sup>29</sup> and with no or few laws that requires a father to be held economically responsible:

There is another phenomenon that we call 'kid without a dad'. In our society, 40 percent of the families are single parent families, one woman is the household lead and she has to take care of the whole family without any help from the father. A lot of kids never know their dad (...). The law is permissive and leaves the father without any responsibilities.

(C. Lespinasse, personal communication, September 20, 2013)

In your country [Norway] the law protects the women, that cannot happen there – when a man who works has a baby he has to pay for the education. Women can require men to take care of the child. Here, alimony exists, but if the person says that he is not working then it will be an issue.

(P. Esperance, personal communication, September 3, 2013).

Both marginalization through the law and difficulties asserting their rights prevent women from claiming alimony or child support, and hinders a parent's ability to enforce the constitutional right of their children to education (Jagannath et al., 2011-2012). Further laws and policies that reflect the needs within Haitian women's socio-economic situation are therefore needed to address GBV from a legal perspective.

#### 4.3.2 Institutional reforms

At the level of institutional reforms, the following recommendations are some of the objectives and initiatives to address GBV identified by Morrison et al. (2004):

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<sup>29</sup> See p. 50.

- Creation or strengthening of government offices dedicated to the advancement of women.
- Increase attention to violence against women by institutions devoted to social and economic development.
- Policies, procedures and protocols to improve the response of police, judges, forensic doctors, and other professionals.
- Sensitization and training of justice system personnel.
- Women's police stations or cells.
- Improved coordination among all justice sector operators (state attorneys, public defenders, prosecutors, and police).
- Policies, procedures and protocols to improve the health care response.
- Specialized survivor services (counseling, support groups) and improved coordination and referrals to NGOs and other sectors.
- Inclusion of sexual harassment prevention and gender in teacher training and certification requirements.
- Inclusion of gender, rights, and violence within the health and family life education, life-skills curriculum.

D'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi (2012) have underlined the lack of resources and provision of services in health sector since the earthquake, which also affects the availability of services for GBV survivors. None the less, the destruction in health facilities caused by the earthquake also brought new attention to the issue, increasing the number of groups providing health services to both the Haitian population in general and to GBV survivors (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). The Commission of Women Victims for Victims (KOFAVIV in Creole), a multi-service organization for violence survivors, and Viva Rio, an organization that works to promote peace and social inclusion, provide health services for GBV survivors (V. E. Vital, personal communication, September 17, 2013; Representatives, personal communication, September 5, 2013). Creating institutional change in the health sector to expand services for women and children is essential in improving women's overall health (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012).

Many Haitian women have expressed distrust in the Haitian National Police (HNP), due to corruption, previous abuses at the hands of the police and a general disregard for issues

regarding GBV expressed by many police officers (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). This lack of trust in the HNP in addressing GBV was also pointed out by several of the interviewees. P. Esperance (RNDDH) stated:

The problem is that there is no rule of law in Haiti, the problem is corruption and impunity. The key institutions are very weak and there is no service. The judicial system is not independent and they cannot do their work independently.

(Personal communication, September 3, 2013).

H. Skjønsvjell (UN Police SGBV Team) explained that after the 2010 earthquake, a UN Police SGBV Team from Norway was implemented in Haiti to assist in improving the HNP's competence and capacity to work with issues relevant to GBV (Personal communication, September 10, 2013). They identified two main areas for assistance: GBV awareness training (project 19) and the need for a physical space at the police stations to interview and examine sexual assault survivors (project 20). In 2011, 36 officers from HNP were trained to become GBV instructors, and starting in 2012, one week long GBV courses were provided for other police officers. In April 2013, the course curriculum was integrated into the regular curriculum at the police academy, making GBV training mandatory for all police students. At the end of 2013, an estimated 2000 HNP had been given the GBV training. Project 20 entailed building office spaces for receiving sexual assault survivors at HNP stations in the 9 departments outside of Port-au-Prince.<sup>30</sup> In addition, the UN Police SGBV Team developed a standard operating procedure (SOP) for GBV cases, which has been approved by the government (H. Skjønsvjell, personal communication, November 25, 2014). The GBV awareness course has also been held for higher officers in all the 10 departments of Haiti (H. Skjønsvjell, personal communication, November 25, 2014).

The exact change in overall attitudes and treatment of GBV survivors by the trained HNP officers difficult to evaluate, but H. Skjønsvjell (UN Police SGBV Team) stated that a general feedback from the MINUSTAH Gender Focal Points in the areas where both project 19 and 20 have been implemented was that GBV cases seemed to be handled in a better way than before (Personal communication, September 10, 2013).

The combination of institutionalization and community awareness to create a behavioral change has been shown to result in more resilient changes. Research done on the

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<sup>30</sup> MINUSTAH was responsible for a similar project in Port-au-Prince.

social determinants of health<sup>31</sup> in Chile revealed that institutionalization of procedures that reflected this ideology, and an inclusion of the general community in the process, ensured an increased sustainability of addressing the social determinants of health, despite some changes on the governmental level (Vega, 2011).

### 4.3.3 Community interventions

Morrison et al., (2004) have provided a list with a set of recommendations for community interventions to address GBV. Some of these include:

- To strengthen community support for women's rights and access to justice.
- National and local networks of organizations working to improve the rights, safety and well-being of women in general and survivors in particular.
- Community-based awareness campaigns (e.g. mass media, workshops, community theatre, protests, etc.) to improve attitudes, norms, practices and resources at the community level.
- Legal literacy training for key groups and stakeholders.
- NGO provision of legal aid and social/ psychological services.
- Efforts to monitor the justice system at the community level with civil society participation.
- Alliances and collaboration between schools and NGOs.
- Mass media campaigns on laws and rights.

A diverse set of strategies to reach various interest groups was highlighted by Morrison et al., (2004) as essential in raising awareness of human rights and in creating support for women's rights as a part of human rights. The organization GARR is a platform for associations and NGOs that works with migration and human rights issues. In particular, they work with Haitian migrants to the Dominican Republic and the IDP after the 2010 earthquake (GARR, 2012). To reach the various groups and age groups of the target populations, C. Lespinasse (GARR) stated: "We provide awareness and educational campaigns in communities, and we decided to reach young people through schools and men through

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<sup>31</sup> The social determinants of health are defined as "the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels" (World Health Organization, 2013, para. 1).

churches. Also, we try to communicate through media” (Personal communication, September 20, 2013). P. Esperance (RNDDH) explained one of their efforts working directly with other organizations:

We do training programs about human rights. In these programs we meet with other organizations, foundations we call ‘grassroot organizations’, and we train the leaders to help them to understand the notion of human rights. We explain that international tools exist to protect and to promote human rights.

(Personal communication, September 3, 2013)

In addition to education, many of the interviewed organizations provided legal support services for sexual assault survivors. C. Lespinasse (GARR) stated: “We work with an association of raped women, we support them, organize meetings, welcome them and help them go to tribunal etc” (Personal communication, September 20, 2013). One of the organizations working directly with rape survivors is KOFAVIV. The organization was founded in 2004 by a group of sexual violence survivors from the poor neighborhood of Martissant in Port-au-Prince (d’Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). They provide a multitude of services for sexual violence survivors and is a strong advocacy group for these women, both in Haiti and internationally (d’Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). KOFAVIV also assists with legal services and cooperates with law firms: “In the legal unit, we accompany them through the justice process. Sometimes we work with BAI or international lawyers” (V. E. Vital, personal communication, September 17, 2013). Similar legal services are provided by Viva Rio: “There is also a program of mediation. We provide the women with a lawyer, we take care of the children involved in the case, and help them if they have to divorce or separate (Representatives, personal communication, September 5, 2013). RNDDH provides legal services in all the ten departments in Haiti:

Victims of human rights abuses come directly to the RNDDH office. They explain their situation and their issues, (...) and if the case relates to justice we follow up with the justice, same thing with the police or other authorities. RNDDH (...) works in the ten departments of the country. In each department we have an office and a full time team, ready to report complaints and follow up the cases. We work in close collaboration with women’s organizations. When we have cases of abuse, violence, rape, we work with them.

(P. Esperance, personal communication, September 3, 2013)

V. E. Vital (KOFIV) explained that their work is divided into 7 different units: Technical, medical, psychosocial, legal, IDP camp, mediatheque and ecozoc:

We get calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We register the cases, and in the psychosocial unit we give psychosocial assistance to the rape victims. In the legal unit we accompany them through the justice process. (...) The IDP camp unit looks after women who live in the camps and they organize trainings (...). The mediatheque unit manages the link between KOFIV and the media, and the ecozoc unit looks after the cultural activities.

(Personal communication, September 17, 2013).

In addition, emergency shelters for their clients and programs for children are amongst their community services (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). The work of KOFIV has received a lot of international attention in the aftermath of the earthquake, which is part of shining light on the severity of GBV and also on the multiple efforts in Haiti that exists to address the issue (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). Having local voices represent their experiences in the international media is also part of providing a narrative of violence that does not reinforce the dominant discourses about violence (Jean-Charles, 2014).

Diversity in the provision of services is also reflected in the GBV programs of Viva Rio. In addition to legal assistance with mediation and health services for violence survivors, Viva Rio trains women's organizations and community leaders in the areas of gender violence and inequality (Representatives, personal communication, September 5, 2013).

Representatives stated that: "Projects are linked. If a person gets beaten or raped and come to us at the mediation office, then she would need a consultation of the fact and a clinical evaluation" (Personal communication, September 5, 2013).

The Young Women's Christian Organization in Haiti (YWCA Haiti) is the coordinator for the Haiti Adolescence Girls Network (HAGN), a network established by different individuals and organizations in 2010 (YWCA Haiti, n.d.). C. Larkin (YWCA Haiti) explained how many women witnessed the lack of safe spaces for adolescence girls in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake, and established HAGN which commits partner

organizations to hold a safe space for girls on a weekly basis (Personal communication, September 6, 2013). In addition to addressing the need for a physical space, C. Larkin (YWCA Haiti) underlined the importance of long term programs and building on existing local structures:

The YWCA did not want to create another NGO because there are so many out there and oftentimes their programs are short term, which I think is a huge liability to actually accomplish something. Year two programs are ending, but year two you are only understanding what you learned here, you know. You are only figuring out what works. So we wanted to tap into existing structures that were already doing this work but needed support. And basically the network supports them with materials, they meet on a monthly basis, and there are also trainings.

(Personal communication, September 6, 2013)

Their goal is two-fold: to empower the girls and to build their social safety net. C. Larkin (YWCA Haiti) stated that the subjects covered in these meetings include GBV, sexual and reproductive health, financial literacy and self-esteem (Personal communication, September 6, 2013). Further, a social safety net can lower the risk of violence: “Studies show that if girls have five solid girlfriends outside of their family, their risk of experiencing physical or sexual violence decreases dramatically, so we really try to emphasize that” (C. Larkin, personal communication, September 6, 2013). The age group that HAGN work with, 10 to 19 years old, is set to include young girls that are often excluded in many development programs targeting adolescence girls:

One of the things that we have seen is that almost all the programs that we come across start at 13 or 14, or a little bit older, and that the younger age group there is really missed. (...) When I say they are missed, I mean that they are not spoken to about these subjects, which is really an important time for girls to be having those kinds of conversations.

(C. Larkin, personal communication, September 6, 2013)

In the report *Beyond Shock*, adolescence girls are described as ‘the hidden majority’ when it comes to rape (d’Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). Data after the 2010 earthquake showed that in more than 60 percent of all rape cases the rape survivor was a teen or younger girl

(d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). Providing support and awareness training for young girls is therefore essential. C. Larkin (YWCA Haiti) described that the personal transformation of many of the girls attending the program was astonishing. Many of the girls have extremely low self-esteem, and by providing them with a sense of responsibility and ownership for their lives, they begin to open up and engage (Personal communication, September 6, 2013). One girl recently described the initial experience of joining the program: "You know what, Colleen? I remember when I started, somebody asked me my name and I just burst out crying because I am not used to having that level of attention. I didn't believe in myself" (C. Larkin, personal communication, September 6, 2013).

However, when addressing unequal gender relations it is also essential to work with men (Flood, 2007). Flood (2007) lists four reasons for including men when promoting gender equality in a society: (a) engaging men in this context addresses men as gendered beings who partake in gender relations; (b) to address men's attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate gender inequality; (c) men will benefit from changing aggressive constructs of masculinity, and; (d) not including men in work on gender relations can lead to hostile reactions from the men. KOFAVIV have expanded their activities to include men's awareness training and engaging men as GBV activists: "We work with the men also, because they are the ones doing the violence" (V. E. Vital, personal communication, September 17, 2013). Training men to act as GBV 'agents' in IDP camps is both part of increasing awareness and to improve women's security (V. E. Vital, personal communication, September 17, 2013). C. Larkin (YWCA Haiti) expressed the need to include men in anti-GBV work to prevent hostile reactions to girls' and women's emancipation:

When women start to become empowered men do not have that same level of knowledge, and that also creates a huge imbalance. (...) We are working with a great group, Beyond Borders, and they really work with the community. They recognized that when girls get empowered and they do not have support around that it can be even more dangerous, so they do a lot of work with communities and getting conversations started in communities.

(C. Larkin, personal communication, September 6, 2013)



In Haiti, the NGO Beyond Borders works within four main areas: (a) end child slavery; (b) guarantee universal access to education; (c) end violence against women and girls, and; (d) replace systems that oppress the poor with systems that support dignified work and sustainable livelihoods (Beyond Borders, n.d.). The community-centered initiative ‘Rethinking Power’ is the main component of addressing violence against women and girls. Recognizing that violence stems from the unequal power relationship between men and women, this program encourages “men to look at how to use their disproportionate amount of power positively – to work for justice for women and girls, and to begin to balance power with women in their lives” (Beyond Borders, 2013, p. 9). In addition to awareness training, they build concrete skills and support for change, facilitating cooperation amongst diverse groups in a community (Beyond Borders, 2013). A survey from 2012 found that several attitudes about VAW had changed in the five communities where Beyond Borders had implemented Rethinking Power since 2010, including a 50 percent decrease in people that blame the woman if a man rapes her (Beyond Borders, 2013). Further, in the same communities, 94 percent believed that a man is not allowed to slap his wife if he is angry with her, and over 50 percent had witnessed a neighbor actively engaging in an activity to prevent VAW (Beyond Borders, 2013).

Working to establish community change and networks is also done by the NGO Project Haiti, that runs programs in Port-au-Prince and St. Louis du Sud (Project Haiti, n.d. a). In addition to education, which will be discussed in the individual behavior strategy section, the organization runs cultural and sports programs, provides training in conflict resolution skills for youth, seminars for women, and works to create international ties through youth projects and exchanges. Project Haiti engages in the international youth film project, ‘Screen – Connecting Youth Through Film’ together with other organizations in Norway, South Africa and Kenya (Project Haiti, n.d. b). Selected participants are able to go on a three month stay in a given country to work with film projects with local youth (Project Haiti, n.d. b). Such programs are part of breaking down cultural barriers, building skills and to teach the youth how to cooperate towards a common goal (Project Haiti, n.d. b). M. Augustin, J. Louis & M. Dorvilier (Project Haiti) stated that “some of our young people will go to Norway soon, to Skien to learn cinematography” (Personal communication, September 10, 2013). Facilitating cooperation through creative projects can also be a way of breaking down gender

inequalities, create opportunities for addressing sensitive issues and give room for dialogue in areas of conflict.

Research plays an important role in work related to GBV (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). Gathering information and uncovering problem areas can assist in creating new and more constructive discourses about violence, and in turn be used for practical application in GBV projects (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). The Observatory Caribbean Migrants (OBMICA in Spanish) was established in 2009 and is a “think-tank on how migration is affecting the Dominican Republic, especially on an island level but also in a broader context” (B. Wooding, personal communication, September 5, 2013). Since its inception, gender has been a topic of interest as the ‘migrant woman’ was absent in most research relevant to Haitian immigration to the Dominican Republic (B. Wooding, personal communication, September 5, 2013). B. Wooding (OBMICA) stated that: “We act as a bridge between the civil society and the authorities, we try to fill research gaps and to make information available, organizing meetings, conferences, lobbying work” (Personal communication, September 5, 2013).

#### 4.3.4 Individual behavioral strategies

In order to address GBV at the level of the individual, Morrison et al. (2004) have recommended the following objectives and initiatives:

- To increase women's awareness of and ability to exercise rights.
- Increase women's ability to make decisions about the timing and nature of sexual relationships.
- Increase women's awareness of and access to social services and economic opportunities.
- Encourage victims of abuse to seek help and to disclose violence to service providers.
- Programs for men aimed at promoting gender equitable relationships and changing norms, attitudes and behaviors.
- GBV prevention within HIV/AIDS and adolescent reproductive health programs.
- Promote gender-equitable, nonviolent sexual partnerships.

In addition to the above recommendations, providing education and training that counter the gender division of labor was listed by Heise (1998) as having a positive effect on reducing gender inequality. C. Larkin (YWCA Haiti) described this as a goal of their leadership program:

Another program is the leadership program, and right now we have 100 girls in the program that are chosen based on need and their level of vulnerability in society. They come to weekly leadership meeting to build their leadership skills, and in addition to that we pay for them to go to technical school so they are actually trained to do jobs. Jobs that are traditionally in Haiti considered male jobs, like mechanic, electrician, and engineer. These have strictly in the past been men's roles, so it's really breaking the gender roles.

(Personal communication, September 6, 2013)

Education and vocational training for women are important aspects of promoting women's economic independence. Through the program Manman Troll, Project Haiti teaches women to read and write, and assist them with acquiring concrete skills that can help them obtain a steady source of income (Project Haiti, n. d. d). M. Augustin, J. Louis & M. Dorvilier (Project Haiti) stressed that: "At Manman Troll we have trained more than 500 women. (...) These are concrete results. When the women leave Manman Troll they flourish and they are more active at church or in their community" (Personal communication, September 10, 2013).

Project Haiti's initial focus was to provide education in the earlier years. Today, Project Haiti provides primary school education for kids through their schools Petit Troll in Port-au-Prince and St. Louis de Sud (Project Haiti, n.d. c). M. Augustin, J. Louis & M. Dorvilier (Project Haiti) stated: "Every year, at the primary school, 100 percent of the kids pass the final exam. When our kids go to college or high school they excel. We are proud of this. At the Petit Troll schools, the children are deprived but they get a quality education" (Personal communication, September 10, 2013).

Providing alternative sources of income for young women that work as prostitutes is one of KOFAVIV's project areas: "With the prostitutes, some of the girls are less than 18 years old and they have babies. We try to give them a new job, we show them that they can get money without selling their body" (V. E. Vital, personal communication, September 17, 2013). The Association Nationale de Protection des Femmes et Enfants Haitiens (ANAPFEH)

(as cited in d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012) conducted research involving 150 sex workers in Haiti. It showed that 6 percent were under the age of 15, and 37 percent are below 20 years. More than 80 percent lived without a partner, and 90 percent had a child (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). D'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi (2012) describe that KOFAVIV's initiative began in 2010, and involves support, counseling and education.

Many of the community programs in the previous section described organizational efforts to educate and inform the Haitian population about their human rights. C. Lespinasse (GARR) stated: "We have to work a lot to inform the women about their rights, because they are the ones who educate the kids. Women are very involved. We also have to start to educate men" (Personal communication, September 20, 2013). As with the community project of 'Rethinking Power' by Beyond Borders, educating men involves that men become conscious of themselves as gendered, and become aware of the power and privilege that comes with being a man.

#### 4.3.5 A combination of efforts

The majority of the interviewees highlighted the complexity of GBV and how different social and institutional structures are linked: "I think the whole issue of violence against women needs to be seen as multifaceted" (B. Wooding, personal communication, September 5, 2013), and: "Everything is linked – legal issues, poverty, the way people live. It is a whole, a combination of different factors. It is structural, it is the Haitian system" (M. Augustin, J. Louis & M. Dorvilier, personal communication, September 10, 2013). C. Larkin (YWCA Haiti) stated:

All the knowledge in the world may not actually change the day to day existence of what these people are dealing with. So I think a lot of the time we are talking about these lessons with the girls and it comes back to: How can they support themselves? How can they feed themselves and their children?

(Personal communication, September 6, 2013).

A legislative framework that supports the rights of women and children is important (Duramy, 2014). However, people's attitudes do not automatically change with changing laws and regulations, as reflected in statement by the interviews regarding the change in the

Haitian Penal Code on ‘sexual aggression’ in 2005.<sup>32</sup> Nolan (2011) underlined that: “Ironically, it was after women finally gained equal suffrage, in the 1950s, that they faced the cruelest state-sanctioned violence” (p. 96).

Morrison et al. (2004) stress the need for a multi-sectoral approach to address the complex structures that forms women’s vulnerability to violence. This is also reflected in the diversity of development projects that each covers important, and often interconnected, areas that influence a woman’s personal development, access to resources and control over her own body.

#### 4.3.6 Challenges

As discussed in the ethical consideration section of this thesis,<sup>33</sup> violence against organizations that address sensitive issues, such as VAW, has been a problem in Haiti (d’Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012). Working to create change in a setting that is characterized by poverty and political instability is described as complicated and challenging by the interviewees. M. Augustin, J. Louis & M. Dorvilier (Project Haiti) stated that: “We meet a lot of difficulties because Haiti is a difficult country. We can fix all the problems we can, but there will always be more. We try to make it better. (...) Each level [age] has its own difficulties” (Personal communication, September 10, 2013). C. Larkin (YWCA Haiti) underlined the role of poverty: “Poverty, I think is the root of so much of this. And people being disempowered in so many ways, financially, emotionally” (Personal communication, September 6, 2013). Engaging men in efforts to reduce GBV is also seen as an issue: “Men do not like to sit and talk with women about what they need to do and stop to do. It is very difficult to change the mentality of the people and to stop the VAW. Men’s awareness is the challenge” (Representatives, personal communication, September 5, 2013). C. Lespinasse (GARR) pointed out: “Impunity is the worst [difficulty]. We make so much effort, and people make so much effort and take the risk to denounce their aggressor, and some authorities do nothing. Criminals get away without any punishment” (Personal communication, September 20, 2013). Along the same lines, P. Esperance (RNDDH) described the difficulty of fighting impunity, as well as meeting the needs of the population:

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<sup>32</sup> See p. 48.

<sup>33</sup> See p. 33.

Fighting against impunity and corruption in a country without rules of law is very hard. We have to face every day with this issue and go through a lot of demands because people do not have access to the judicial system. We receive victims every day and we cannot solve all the problems. People with power and connections can do whatever they want, so that is why this situation is so complicated.

(Personal communication, September 3, 2013)

Further interviewees described issues relating to their projects:

With project 20 there have been several challenges. First of all, we need to find a suitable location to build on, and second, when you are constructing a building all the paperwork and documentation have to be in order – and that is a challenge. We need assistance from engineers, HNP, and a UN organization which involves a lot of bureaucracy.

(H. Skjønsvell, personal communication, September 10, 2013)

I think that the Dominican Republic has been weak on some of the issues that we deal with. It is highly sensitive politically. So it has to be worked on through the networks and synergies with society organizations and also their counterparts in Haiti. Another difficulty is the attitudes, (...) sometimes it is difficult to dialogue. They are accustomed to think that this is our country and we do what we want, despite having signed a number of international agreements.

(B. Wooding, personal communication, September 5, 2013)

## 4.4 Social change: The ripple effect

Despite working in a challenging context, the role of social cohesion and sharing of information were two aspects of the programs that many of the interviewees mentioned. In particular, they described people's eagerness to pass on acquired information and skills to others in their community. M. Augustin, J. Louis & M. Dorvilier (Project Haiti) stated: "We would like to add this observation: Kids who went to Petit Trol and Etape Jeunesse became teachers to help the kids that are in school now. It's incredible! Some of the young people

speak English and they teach the others. There is continuity.” (Personal communication, September 10, 2013). C. Larkin (YWCA Haiti) described a similar effect of HAGN:

All of them want to become mentor too. Which is great, because I think (...) that is really when you start to integrate these things into your own life. All this knowledge, when you start to have to teach someone else that is when you start to integrate it into your own life. And what we would like to do is to create a big sister program, because everyone cannot become a mentor.

(Personal communication, September 6, 2013)

C. Larkin (YWCA Haiti) also recounted the story of a Haitian woman attending yoga classes in her community: “Every day I come home from this yoga and everybody wants to know what I have learned. They are all sitting there waiting for me, and they give me a seat and I share it” (Personal communication, September 6, 2013). As M. Augustin, J. Louis & M. Dorvilier (Project Haiti) pointed out: “It [the change] comes from the individual to the collective” (Personal communication, September 10, 2013). These women see immediate results in how the kids that attend their programs learn to deal with violence, and in addition “we will see other results later, because they spread the information to their community. The children tell others that they should not fight” (M. Augustin, J. Louis & M. Dorvilier, personal communication, September 10, 2013). The sustainability of social change is by large upheld by sharing knowledge and building on the diversity of individual skills and strengths. By acknowledging people’s wish to share what they have learned, one can create structures that facilitate social cohesion.

## 4.5 Conclusion

The experience of development and humanitarian aid in Haiti has been characterized by failed efforts, as well as well-structured projects that have resulted in social and individual change. Theories to incorporate gender in development efforts have increasingly focused on the need to understand how gender inequality is recreated through multiple structures, and that efforts to address GBV must be multi-sectoral. The experiences of the local and international organizations interviewed in Haiti reveal a setting that is both challenging and complex. However, their stories of individual and community changes that result from development initiatives underline that something is changing. As Schuller (2012)

demonstrated, many development efforts fail because they do not include the very population they claim to serve in the planning of their programs. The underlying focus on participation and inclusion in the organizations interviewed, and the development of projects based on seen or expressed needs in the population they serve, provide a more positive approach to change.



## 5 Conclusion

We are not afraid of the earthquake, that is just natural and there is nothing we can do about it. What we are afraid of is the boys. The boys who steal our sisters that we never see again. Who take our friends into a tent. That is what we are afraid of.

(C. Larkin, personal communication, September 6, 2013.

*Recounting the stories of young girls after the 2010 earthquake)*

Due to the historical, political, social and economic factors, the earthquake that struck the country on January 12<sup>th</sup> 2010 had devastating impacts (Oliver-Smith, 2012). It brought to the surface a lot of issues that were already present in the affected communities, including inequalities embedded in both national and international structures and their disproportionate effect on women. The high levels of GBV that were reported in the aftermath of the earthquake were thus an expression of these pre-existing inequalities, and was aggravated by a lack of gender sensitivity in the delivery of relief efforts (d'Adesky & PotoFamn+Fi, 2012).

A central aspect of the various forms of VAW reflects women's bodies as sites for contestation and control. In Haiti, this was an element reinforced by the French colonizers, and expressed throughout the country's history since it gained its independence. Anderson & Umberson (2001) state: "Cultural beliefs about underlying and essential differences between women and men, and social structures that constitute and are constituted by these beliefs, are reproduced by the accomplishment of gender" (p. 359-360). Thus by constructing variations of masculinity and femininity that validate inequalities and men's use of violence, our 'accomplishment of gender' recreates violent relationships. Through interviews conducted with representatives for eight different local and international organizations working to address GBV in Haiti, two overarching subjects were central to all the identified themes regarding male-female gender relations in Haiti: gender inequality and power. Assuming that power is dispositional, how men choose to exercise the power that is ascribed to their gender is related to social and cultural attitudes of accepted behavior (Steven, 2005). The five themes regarding cultural attitudes about male-female gender relations that I discovered were: (a) Men as superior to women; (b) "macho" culture; (c) differing cultural attitudes regarding men and women's sexuality; (d) cultural acceptance of violence, and; (e) gender division of labor.

Many of these themes match several of the cultural and social attitudes recognized as risk factors for increasing GBV in the ecological framework developed by Heise (1998). This framework presents “violence as a multifaceted phenomenon grounded in an interplay among personal, situational, and sociocultural factors” (Heise, 1998, p. 263-264). In turn, the research showed how the identified cultural attitudes were expressed and reinforced in social and institutional structures, reflecting the structural violence presented by Farmer (as cited in Fadlalla & Stein, 2012) and Schuller (2014). The main sites for expression were: (a) the home; (b) economy; (c) politics; (d) laws and regulations, and; (e) education. These inequalities shape the differences in men and women’s control over their bodies and their access to resources (Sweetman, 2001), and take part in forming women’s gendered vulnerability to disaster. As expressed by several of the interviewees, women were among the most vulnerable groups in Haiti before the earthquake - and when a disaster hits it is the most vulnerable that suffer the most. IJDH et al. (2010) stated that the lack of cooperation with local Haitians in the design and execution of relief efforts deepened the structural inequalities that were present before the earthquake.

All interventions, *regardless of their aim*, inevitably challenge, alter or entrench power relations between different social groups.

(Sweetman, 2001, p. 4).

The experience of development and humanitarian aid in Haiti has as reinforced many of the negative portraits of NGOs and multilateral organizations, as well as reflected the presence of well-organized and culturally sensitive organizations that focus on participation, cooperation and dialogue in their efforts to address structural violence and social inequalities. Through the interviews performed in Haiti, it became clear that a combination of different efforts to address GBV produce the best results, as they reinforce and support each other. Enarson (1998) has asked: “How are gender relations affected over time by the social experience of disaster?” (p. 157). The structures and relationships we build can uphold and deepen existing inequalities, or be used as avenues for change. Knowing women’s vulnerability to violence in a disaster, it becomes then not only essential to address the underlying social, political and economic causes for GBV (True, 2012), but also to include gender analysis in all humanitarian aid (Sweetman, 2001) and to integrate disaster risk reduction (DRR) in already existing efforts (Global Protection Cluster, n.d). In this process, a

willingness to listen and to engage in dialogue with different groups of the population in question is important. Rondinelli (1993) stressed that the complexity of societies and the number of hidden variables that influence people's lives make us unable to predict and control the outcomes of deliberate interventions.

*The most important is therefore to ask, and to listen.*

## What changes would you like to see?

I would like to see the justice getting in order. Justice has to be a tool to serve human rights and the rule of law. At the moment justice serves dictatorship, it has to serve democracy and equality. There is a need for a deep change in the justice system and with the country's leaders. I would love to see real changes in women's social and economic lives. For example, here the unemployment is high, women should get some decent working conditions. Women need time for themselves, they are overexploited. The government should take over the children's education and organize kindergartens. Then women can find some time to go to education or work training, learn how to read and get more integrated in society. The role of women is fundamental.

(C. Lespinasse, personal communication, September 20, 2013)

The state of law, the respect for human rights, the reinforcement of institutions. Each institution should be independent and they should not serve an authority, but the population. I would like for people to understand the [need for] equality between men and women.

(P. Esperance, personal communication, September 3, 2013)

We would like to see women living well in a community (...). We would like women to be emancipated and free to talk.

(Representatives, personal communication, September 5, 2013)

In terms of gender based violence, I think that Haiti needs to adopt a more robust legislation (...). And then the women concerned need to be more aware of their rights, and how to assert their rights. And work needs to be done with the men, on the questions of masculinity and greater responsibility (...). Because otherwise, the inequality between men and women will simply be sustained.

(B. Wooding, personal communication, September 5, 2013)

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# Appendix

A. (English version)

Inquiry about participation in the research project

## *Addressing gender based violence in Haiti in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake*

### **Background and purpose**

My name is Ann Christin Eng and I am a master's student at the Centre for Gender Research at the University of Oslo, Norway. My purpose here in Haiti is to interview organizations about their work regarding gender based violence/violence against women in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake, and I will use this information as basis for writing my master thesis on the subject.

You have been asked to participate due to your experience working with gender based violence in this area.

### **What does participating in this study entail?**

One interview, lasting about 1 hour, regarding the subjects of gender in Haiti, gender based violence, how you organization is addressing gender based violence and your cooperation with other organizations.

### **What will happen with the information about you?**

All personal information will be confidential. Your personal information will be stored separate from your interview and only Ann Christin Eng will have access to it. The interviews will be transcribed and translated by an assistant in Norway.

Upon approval from the university, the thesis will be made publically available on [www.duo.no](http://www.duo.no). If you choose to remain anonymous, it will not be possible to recognize you in the published work.

The project will end on the 10th of May 2014<sup>34</sup>. Recordings will then be deleted, as well as information that can tie you to your interview.

### **Voluntary participation**

This study is based on voluntary participation, and you may at any time withdraw your consent. If you withdraw, all information about you will be made anonymous.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact Ann Christin Eng at [anncen@student.hf.uio.no](mailto:anncen@student.hf.uio.no), or Project Supervisor Jorunn Økland at [jorunn.okland@stk.uio.no](mailto:jorunn.okland@stk.uio.no).

This study is reported to the Norwegian Social Science Data Services.

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<sup>34</sup> Due to an extra semester the end date of the project was postponed to the 10th of December, 2014.

## Consent to participate in the study

I have received information about the study and I am willing to participate.

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(Signature, date)

☐ *I would like to remain anonymous in the published work*

## Interview Guide

# Fieldwork Haiti Fall 2013

### *Understanding of gender*

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1. What are the general gender roles in the area of Haiti where you are working? (What is expected of women in terms of behavior, dress and work? What is expected of men in terms of behavior, dress and work? )
2. Are there any social consequences for not conforming to these gender roles?
3. Are women considered equal to, superior to, or subordinate to men? How is this expressed?
4. Is violence seen as an accepted part of either masculinity or femininity?

### *Violence against women*

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5. What is the level of violence against women in this area?
6. What age groups of women are the most affected?
7. Are there general characteristics of the perpetrators? If so, what are they?
8. What do you consider as the greatest factors contributing to this issue? (such as living conditions, security, subordination of women etc)
9. How do you believe that the 2010 earthquake has affected the levels of violence against women?
10. What do you believe are the connections between disasters in general and violence against women?
11. Is violence against women a causal factor for women's migration from this area?

### *Combating the issue of violence against women*

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12. What are your organization's projects for addressing violence against women?
13. Why choose these methods? Theories? Practical experience?
14. What have been the results of these interventions?
15. According to your experience, what interventions have yielded the best results?
16. How are the projects evaluated?
17. Are men and women included in preventative efforts? Boys and girl? Why/why not?  
How?
18. What are the greatest challenges to combating violence against women in this area?
19. What changes would you like to see happen?

### *Cooperation*

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20. Are there other organizations in this area working with the same issue?



21. Do you work in partnership with other organizations? If so, how?
22. Is there a coordinating body?
23. What role does the government play? (Is it supportive or not of your efforts? How?)

*Extra*

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24. Is there anything that you would like to add?



**Picture 1: "Deye mon gen mon" (Beyond mountains, there are mountains) Creole proverb. Haiti**